

# BANDWAGON

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

MAY - JUNE 2002





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MAY-JUNE 2002

**FRED D. PFENING, JR. EDITOR AND PUBLISHER**

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### THE FRONT COVER

The striking Frank A. Robbins Circus one sheet lithograph was found on the Internet by collector Ken Harck.

After purchasing this bill he found the seller had a number of other Robbins posters. Harck also acquired these. All of the Robbins posters were in need of restoration and mounting. This has been done.

In coming issues all of the Harck Robbins lithographs will be reproduced.

The cover litho is the same design used by Robbins on his heralds and couriers in the c-1906 period.

### THE BACK COVER

This illustration is the back cover of the 1938 Robbins Bros. Circus courier.

Robbins was the second unit of Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell, owners of Cole Bros. Circus. The Cole show closed early and Clyde Beatty was sent to the Robbins show to finish the season in the South.

### DUES NOTICES

Circus Historical Society dues and *Bandwagon* subscription notices were mailed in early April.

Please send your payment at once. Your payment must be received by July 1 or the July-August *Bandwagon* will not be sent.

The CHS has suffered a loss of members in recent years. All current members and subscribers are urged to renew as many outstanding articles will be published in upcoming issues.

### CHS INTERNET WEB SITE

A brand new Circus Historical Society web site has been posted on the Internet. The address is <http://www.circushistory.org>.

The four page color site provides a history of the organization and a page about the *Bandwagon* with a color cover shown.

There is also a membership application and a page about the 2002 CHS convention in Toronto.

We thank Judy Griffin for designing and placing the site on the Internet.

### THE 2002 CHS CONVENTION

A number of registrations have already been received for the 2002 Circus Historical Society convention

in Toronto, Ontario, Canada August 22-25.

The first new edition in three years of Cirque du Soleil will be the featured circus. The Canadian National Exposition and the Ontario Place concerts will all be going as well. The hotel and registration information was listed on the insert page of the March-April *Bandwagon*.

Currently one United States dollar buys one dollar and fifty-nine cents Canadian. The dollar amounts listed on the registration form are in United States dollars and reflect the current exchange rate.

### ADDRESS CHANGES

Each time the *Bandwagon* is mailed a number of copies are returned by the post office do to address changes.

The post office charges the CHS \$1.65 each time a magazine is returned.

Please advise the Editor when you have an address change. Missing issues are not replaced no charge.

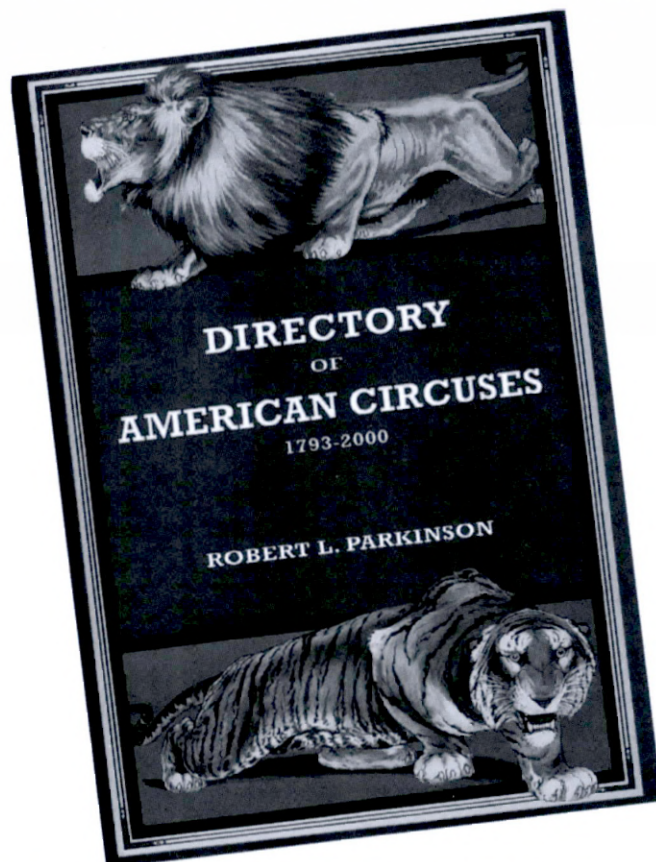
## BACK ISSUES OF BANDWAGON

1966-Jan.-Feb.  
1967-Nov.-Dec.  
1968-All but Jan.-Feb.  
1969-July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.  
1970-All but July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.  
1971-All but Mar.-Ap., May-June.  
1972-All available.  
1973-All but Nov.-Dec.  
1974-All but Mar.-Ap., May-June.  
1975-All available.  
1976-All but Jan.-Feb., Nov.-Dec.  
1977-All but Mar.-Ap.  
1978-All available.  
1979-All but Jan.-Feb.  
1980-1986-All available.  
1987-All but Nov.-Dec.  
1988-2001-All available.

Price is \$4.00 each. Add \$2.00 postage for one issue, \$5.00 for more than one issue. Please select substitutes in case we are out of any of above.

BANDWAGON BACK ISSUES  
2515 DORSET RD.  
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## **NOW AVAILABLE**

For 35 years Bob Parkinson cataloged America's circuses. He added titles and years as he found references. Following his death his work was updated by his son Greg. The result is this cross-referenced 452 page book.

The listing contains titles from the 1956 A. G. V. A, Circus to Zoyara's Equiotator Circus in 1863.

You can now purchase this hard bound book from its publisher the Circus World Museum.

The price is \$29.95, plus \$5 shipping and handling. Wisconsin residents add 5.5% sales tax. It can be purchased over the phone, by fax, mail or web-site. You may use money order, check, Master Card, Visa, Discover or American Express.

Direct orders to:  
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Attn: Nancy Howell  
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# HEBER BROS. GREATER SHOW

By Robert A. Heber

*This paper was presented at the 2001 Circus Historical Society convention.*

A colossal congress of trapeze, horizontal bar and Roman ring aerialists, acrobats, wire performers, contortionists, equilibrist, clowns, Russian dancers, cowboys and Indians, performing ponies, donkeys, dogs, bears and monkeys and beautiful specimens of wild animals.

Free band concert under mammoth waterproof tents with two shows daily at 2 and 8 p.m.

Admission 25 cents with children under nine, 15 cents.

I can tell you what I learned while growing up, the stories and family legends, but much of what I know about Heber Bros. Greater Show comes from researching the preserved records consisting of photos and clippings.

Let me introduce you to Pop Heber, my great grandfather. Pop owned the only circus with its own printing plant. Pop and my great grandmother, Abble Rose Corlies, produced five children:

Ben Heber, my grandfather, was born in 1881. He was the eldest and was the Advance Agent for Heber Bros. Greater Show.

Reg Heber was born in 1884. Reg was the more assertive of the brothers. He was a musical director, trumpet player, assistant manager and performed in sketches and 1C playlets." Reg was also a talented magician who performed with the circus indoors as well as in other venues. Reg married Avanell Henderson who was a pianist.

George Heber, born in 1886, was a talented trombonist. He performed as a clown and on the "Roman rings" with his brother Rollo. He was the Master



Reginald C. "Pop" Heber, founder of Heber Bros. Circus. All illustrations are from the Robert A. and Brian R. Heber collection, Circus World Museum, unless otherwise credited.

of Transportation. George married Adella Gill who also was a performer.

Rollo Heber, born in 1891, the last of the four brothers, was a talented

A 1909 photo of the Heber Bros. band and marquee. Pfening Archives.



drummer, marimba and xylophone player, performer and an awesome animal trainer.

The Heber Girls.

Rose Heber, born in 1889, the brothers' only sister, was the treasurer and played the piano. Rose married Francis "Mac" McKinney who performed functions as a press agent.

Avanell Heber, wife of Reg, became an integral part of the show and the Heber family.

Adella "Dell" Heber, wife of George, was also a performer.

Pop and Abbie were married in 1879. Pop, genuinely a character, was the ticket taker, clown, Indian chief, bandleader and director general.

Pop was an opponent of vaccination and fought hard against it. He ran for Columbus, Ohio, City Council and lost. He was a frequent writer of letters-to-the-editor.

He was known for his friendliness and good reputation. Everyone knew Pop and everyone stopped to talk with him. He stood out as he always smiled, wore a white Palm Beach suit and a carnation in his lapel. He was hard to miss, especially when he completed this outfit with his pet monkey on his shoulder.

Heber Bros. was a "clean show," strictly on the square, a family show that was very popular. Many columnists remark about the "clean show for all the family." People were excited to see them come back.

The circus made money every year.

Pop demanded that his employees act as ladies and gentlemen. Newspaper articles reported the following: "Associates conducted themselves with decorum and propriety."

"Glennie Kimmel received the blue envelope because he was caught 'chinning' with two girls at



the show tent entrance."

In addition to the many columnists who wrote about Pop, Billy Ireland, a famous newspaper cartoonist, repeatedly featured him as part of his whole page Sunday color cartoon, "The Passing Show."

The family tradition is that Heber Bros. started as a musical entertainment act on packet boats on the Finger Lakes in up state New York. Auburn, New York seems to be the starting point. Several of the children were born there. However, some articles mention Syracuse, New York, as the starting point for the show.

Various newspaper articles give dates for the beginning of Heber Bros. as 1879, 1883, 1884, and 1893.

The only written document I have concerning the dates for the run of Heber Bros. Greater Show says that the circus portion of Heber Bros. ran from 1907 to 1917. I would expect this information to be accurate as it is in Avaneil Heber's handwriting and she states it is from husband Reg's notes.

It reads: "Pop Heber, Born on the 7th, Died on the 5th. Buried on the 7th of July 1932, Died 3:10 A.M., Lowered to the ground 3:10 P.M. 7th day 7th month. Show started 1907, closed 1917."

It is particularly fitting that I am donating the majority of the existing Heber Bros. material to Circus World Museum on the 69th anniversary of Pop's death.

The family homestead and circus headquarters was 312 17th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio. The house was built by Pop and at one time housed 3 generations in its 12 rooms. The third floor was fitted out as a "state-of-the-art" gymnasium.

There was a barn in the rear of the property that served as the print shop and housed some animals. There was a sawdust ring in the yard.

Teddy, the bear, lived in the barn in back of the house and in good



The Heber dining tent and cook wagon at right.

weather was tethered in the backyard. My father, then a small child, was rescued when he wandered too close to Teddy.

Heber Bros. was truly an "All in the Family" circus. They weren't just



Inside the Heber cook wagon.

executives. The entire family participated in performance as well as holding executive positions. Everyone doubled in brass.

All the children married and the

The Heber draft stock lined up on the midway.



spouses participated in the circus both behind the scenes and as performers.

Ben Heber was the advance man. He started traveling with a wagon and eventually drove a car, one of two the circus owned.

One billposter narrowly missed being struck by lightning. He was approaching a barn when it was struck. The barn and

its contents burned to the ground.

My grandfather managed to use every available space that he could find for his posters, including store windows, barns and fences.

Kids were always willing to post paper and distribute heralds for comps.

My grandfather managed to find space for Heber Bros. paper in a choice spot above the Ringling Bros. paper.

A letter from Robinson's Shows apologizes for covering Heber Bros. paper. Dan R Robinson states that he does not allow his men to do this and that it wouldn't happen again.

Heber Bros. Greater Show was truly a wagon show with 27 wagons and 120 head of horses. There was a wagon for each need.

Inventory, date unknown

20 Cots

1 Side show tent all poles, seats, ropes, stakes

8 Side show banners

1 Main show tent

1 Main show tent used last year

1 Stable tent

1 Cook tent, dishes and cook utensils

1 Cook wagon

1 Dad's wagon (probably Pop Heber's wagon)

2 Beggs wagons

2 Stage wagons

1 Advance wagon

1 Band wagon

1 Band wagon

1 Canvass wagon

3 Pole and seat wagons

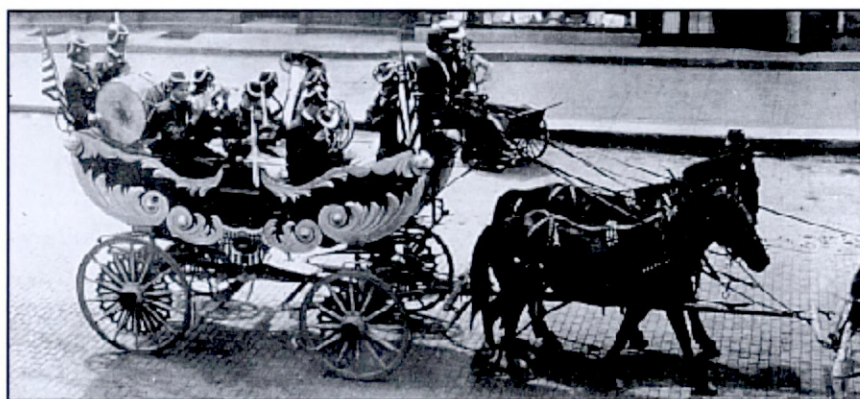
3 Dog and monkey cages

4 White cages

1 Black and white spotted pony



1 Stallion  
 1 White and Roan spotted pony  
 1 Black horse  
 1 Sorrel mare spotted pony  
 1 Shetland pony  
 1 Saddle Horse, Prince  
 1 Roan horse  
 10 Sets double harness  
 2 Jack mules-Rock and Bob  
 2 Jennie mules-Rodie & Babe  
 1 Black horse spot on shoulder.  
 White hind feet  
 1 Roan horse named Bill-white  
 face  
 1 Black horse with spot on face  
 named Barney  
 1 Black horse Tobe  
 1 "Flee" Bitten brown horse named  
 Joe-Spot in face  
 1 Gray horse named Chet  
 1 Gray horse named Billy  
 1 Bay horse named Tim  
 1 Bay horse named Bill  
 1 Sorrel horse-white face Prince  
 1 Sorrel horse-white face  
 1 Dark Roan mare  
 Black horse Peanuts  
 1 Bay horse  
 1 Black horse no name White face  
 1 Chestnut sorrel horse  
 1 Donkey  
 1 Bay mare  
 2 Studs  
 Horses  
 Major  
 Prince,  
 Silver  
 Commodore  
 Queen  
 Billy  
 1 roan & white  
 4 Sets double pony harness  
 2 Sets white pony harness  
 2 Saddles  
 1 Wegman & Co. Piano & Stool  
 1 Bear  
 1 Leopard  
 4 Monkeys  
 1 Large parrot  
 14 Dogs  
 1 Goat  
 1 Air calliope  
 1 Ford auto  
 2 Chandler & P (Price) Presses  
 1 Motor  
 1 American Type Foundry Co.  
 printing press  
 1 C & P paper cutter (Chandler &  
 Price)  
 All type trays, Benches & Gas  
 Engine  
 Printing office complete



The show used electric lights while many train shows were still using gaslights. They later rented this equipment to other road shows under the name of Columbus Calcium Light.

Heber Bros. owned three bandwagons. There are several photos of the bandwagon they seemed to use regularly and I recognize my uncles on board. One bandwagon was built for the Tedrow-Gettle Circus out of Nelsonville, Ohio. It went to the Great Luger Circus in 1907 for one year and then to the Hebers.

For a short time they owned a Sparks bandwagon. A 1914 letter from J. H. Eschman confirms that Heber Bros. owned the Sparks wagon, as it is an offer to buy it.

The show went through "Hell" while traveling hot, dusty and unpaved roads cut through hillsides. And they literally went through High Water to get to their next date braving the floods and whatever else befell the wagon show.

Interesting stories appear about the roustabouts or "Rummies" as Avaneil noted in her photo album.

A 22-year old named Webber, from Fayette, Ohio, broke his leg trying to ride Dynamite the un-rideable mule. He claimed the mule stepped on him but witnesses said the leg was broken when he fell off.

An employee of Heber Bros.

The former Tedrow-Gettle Circus and Great Luger bandwagon on the Heber show. Pfening Archives.

Greater Show was cleaning his clothes in a bucket of gasoline when it exploded. He had been smoking when the cigarette dropped into the bucket. He was taken to a hospital in Toledo, in critical condition.

I have found only one report of a blow down.

Doc Waddell and his wife were frequent dinner guests of the Hebers. He writes that when you eat with the Heber Bros. they "feed right" and white linen tablecloths and napkins are the order of the day.

Avaneil's notes indicate that aerial photos of the circus grounds were taken from a 200-foot tower.

A photo of a show lot with railroad tracks in the foreground shows that Heber Bros. played both sides of the tracks.

There are photos of performers but

The former Sullivan and Eagle Sparks bandwagon on Heber.





few are identified with the exception of family members whom I can name.

Side show performers are not generally a part of the Heber photographic collection.

There is an unusual photo of an unidentified slack wire artist performing outdoors. It caught him in motion. Cameras were not as sophisticated then as they are today.

Music was almost inbred into the Heber family. It was a great part of each performance. There were free band concerts before every show.

Reports say the show carried 65 people, two bands, 40 horses, many performing Shetland ponies, and 20 acting dogs, bears and monkeys. One photograph shows the entire troop at the main entrance.

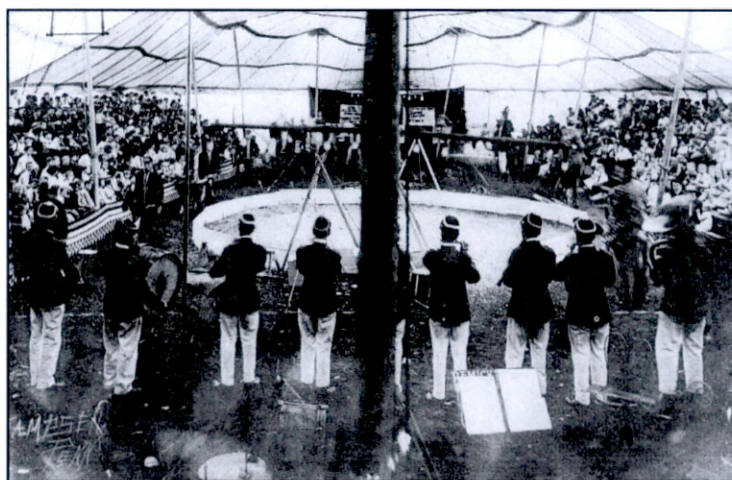
My grandfather sold tickets. Adults 25 cents and children under nine 15 cents.

If we went to Heber Bros. Greater Show whom might we find performing inside?

A large scrapbook contains letters of application for employment. Their letterheads are very descriptive of the act they represent. Several of their letterheads diagram their act. They really show and say what they do. One letterhead from a Tessier is interesting as I have a niece married to a French-Canadian Tessier but I don't know if they are related.

This was truly a family circus. George and Rollo Heber performed on the Roman Rings and bars.

In addition to Teddy, the bear,



The Heber band lined up for the grand entry. Note the canvas ring.

there were other bear acts as well.

One of the dog acts was called "The City of Dogville." The Dog Fire Company brought on fire equipment and an ambulance. Dogs extinguished a fire with a hose and climbed a ladder to rescue a "child" from a burning building.

Rollo Heber was regarded as the "crowd puller." He did not purchase trained animals. Rollo trained all his animals from day one.

He had no preference as to breed, but had better luck with purebred animals. His dogs were trained to go on and perform without any visible direction.

Jocko, the monkey, was the star of the show. He interacted with the dogs and ponies.

Kids aggregated whenever the circus was in town. Pop always carried a pocket full of comps for the kids

The band playing at front door next to the ticket wagon on left.

who didn't have the price of admission.

My father traveled with the circus until he was three. This gives credibility to the 1917 closing date as he was three in November 1916. My dad didn't like the "table stunt." The clowns stacked successively smaller tables on top of each other and then placed a chair on the very top. Uncle George would climb to the top and rock the tables until they fell. My father ran crying to his mother. The tables were later used in the print shop for utility tables.

There is one clown sketch that survived.

The clown band enters.

"What we going to do?"

"Guess we better tune up."

"Let's have a little music. (play sour notes)"

"Guess we better tune hadn't we?" (more rotten notes)

"Ain't that sweet?" (all shake hands)

"Are you tuned up, George? (Now you make a nice juicy one)"

"What key is that?"

"Key of C."

"Sounds like L to me"

(Bang . . . shots)

Rollo was a respected animal trainer. Rollo trained his ponies to stage mimic battles between America and Mexico. They marched and counter marched to form into offensive and defensive squadrons and fired cannons.

Rollo was a very patient trainer and he genuinely loved his animals. His animals were not pets. They exhibited jealousy, craved to perform and genuinely enjoyed applause as their reward.

Heber Bros. saw that every kid got to ride a pony after the show.

I guess some might call Heber Bros. a "Dog and Pony Show." But they had a lot more.

Avanell Heber was a woman of many talents. She acted in skits, played the piano and balanced on the large ball while juggling with Indian clubs.

The Heber sisters referred to in







This 1913 lot scene shows a three pole big top, but the show used only one ring.

Sisters weren't sisters. Avanell and Dell were sisters-in-law. Neither were blood relatives, but Pop and Abbie treated them as if they were.

Uncle George was the family clown and as I knew him in later years he was the black sheep. George outlived all his brothers. He wasn't around much. He worked at the print shop sporadically during my youth, but he would disappear for years at a time. He used to show me his deformed hands due to his performance on the rings and bars.

Photographic records do not, for the most part, identify performers. Walter Harter, a native of Utica, Ohio, is one that is identified.

There are a number of drawings for advertisements done by an unknown artist. They may have been the work of Avanell Heber, Avanell was an accomplished artist and several of her best pictures have survived, including one that won first premium at the Kansas State Fair. The drawings give a good idea of the clown sketches.

Pre-performance band concerts were the order of the day. The Hebers played in these concerts and then appeared as performers in the show.

Reports indicate that they actually had two bands.

A photograph taken inside the "big top" features the grand entry with the band playing in the foreground.

The show performed a number of "playlets" and sketches. Clippings indicate that Pop put on a red beard and played a Rube.

Heber Bros. purchased the Great Wagner Show from Indiana giving them Indians, minstrels and vaudeville. Minstrels were popular. Leo Washburn was featured with Heber Bros.

Heber Bros. Greater Show advertised as three combined shows...

Circus, Wild West and Menagerie

After his circus days Pop was often seen on the streets of Columbus dressed in his white Palm Beach suit, flower in his lapel with his pet monkey on his shoulder. While attending the local burlesque house he threw roses to the ladies.

I really don't know what happened with the circus when it closed in 1917. However, when closing 312 17th Avenue we found 17 trunks, band uniforms, clown costumes and shoes, a gun, a tent pole and a prop trombone.

The brothers put all their efforts into the printing business. The printing business proved to be very profitable and provided a living for the whole family for four generations.

I suspect that they quietly sold the equipment. A Canadian customs entry manifest, sent me by Fred Dahlinger, shows that two railway cars of Heber Bros. went into Alberta, Canada, June 1, 1919, per G. W. Christy. This was two years after the show closed. This suggests that Christy bought some equipment and the title.

Though the Heber Bros. quit the circus business they continued with entertainment. Their love of music was shared with Columbus both in band and orchestra format.

Pop continued in the entertainment business in another venue. He was the first person to show motion pictures in Columbus, Ohio. He started with a piece of canvas stretched between two trees for a screen. He flashed election returns on a screen on the top of buildings in downtown Columbus.

They organized a very popular dance orchestra with Reg on the trumpet, George on the trombone, Rollo on the xylophone and my grandfather on the violin. They were featured on the radio while performing as the State Auto Insurance Orchestra.

Reg continued with his magic act.

Pop died in 1932, Rollo in 1935,

Reg in 1943, and Ben in 1947. George lived into the 1960's but was never fully active in the printing business. Rose had long since moved to California and she died in the late 1960s.

Of Pop's five children, two produced offspring. Ben had a son, my father, and Rollo, two girls. I have a brother and one of Rollo's daughters had three boys.

There are six great, great grandchildren and seven great, great, great grandchildren descended through Ben.

Through Rollo there are three Perry brothers and seven great, great grandchildren.

The number 7 continues to have relevance to the Heber family.

**More about  
Heber Bros. Circus  
By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.**

In many ways the Heber Bros. Circus was typical of a number of mid-sized wagon circuses that toured in the early 20th century. However, it was indeed a family operation. All of Reginald C. Heber's sons and daughters were active in the staffing and performing of the circus.

The show was originally a musical and vaudeville performance beginning around 1880. As a circus it toured to 1917. It was a one ringer, traveling on around twenty-seven wagons. The show used a wide variety of special lithographs from the Donaldson Litho Company and National Engraving Company. It posted beautiful large bill stands.

The circus was indeed a "brothers" outfit, with father Reginald C. Heber, as the guiding power. His sons were all performers and executives. The big top had scenery across the backside. The performance featured lots of music, dancing, vaudeville and some skits, as well as standard circus acts. All of the Heber sons played musical instruments and the daughters sang and danced.

This additional information about the Heber show came from newspapers and trade publications.

**1908**

The March 22, 1908 *Billboard* con-



tained this short reference to Heber Bros. Circus: "The business staff of Heber Bros. Greater Tent Shows is Reginald C. Heber, business manager and treasurer; Rollo F. Heber, secretary; A. Henderson, musical director; Benjamin C. Heber, advance agent and Buck Morey, boss canvasman."

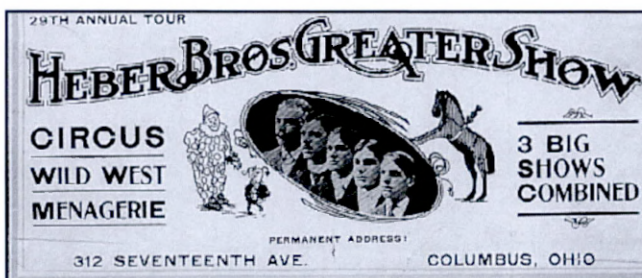
This note appeared in the March 14, 1908 *Billboard*: "The fifteenth annual tour of the Heber Brothers' Greater Tent Shows will commence at Columbus, Ohio on May 1. New tents, wagons, uniforms and other equipment have been added to the show and a number of high-class performers have been engaged."

1909

This article by Doc Waddell about the Heber circus appeared in the *Opera House Reporter* and *Billboard* around 1909: "There winters in Columbus, Ohio, the Heber Brothers Circus. It is a wagon show, twenty-nine years old, born in New York State. The John Robinson organization was launched in the same state. From the standpoint of investment the John Robinson Circus was the biggest money-maker known to outdoor amusements. This money-making mantle has passed to the shoulders of Heber Bros. The Heber Bros., are also the legitimate successors here to the well remembered Sells Brothers, who put Columbus, Ohio, on the map.

"Old Troopers lovingly revere Sellsville and all its tender sacred memories. The Heber Bros. outfit: winters not far from Sellsville, in the northern part of Columbus. I often visited the Heber winter quarters just previous to there opening this spring. These visits told me a story of an astute organization and healthy growth.

"Heretofore, this circus has opened in a sort of remote outer-edge corner of the city. This year they came down town and put up in the Cream-and-Honey portion; in fact, their canvas covered

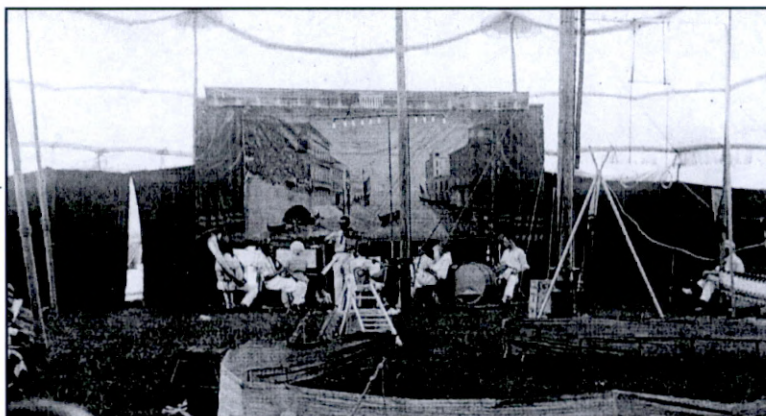


The Heber Bros. Circus letterhead was printed in blue, red and brown. Circus World Museum collection.

the site of the Tabernacle where Billy Sunday held forth, when here. They exhibited one week, afternoon and night, and most of the time turned people away.

"The program follows: Band concert, 1:30 to 2:00 and 7:20 to 8:00; Reginald Franklin, Director; Grand entry; Display No. 1, Wm. A. Wagner, Slack Wire Artist; Display No. 2, Clown statue, Geo. T. Heber; Old Man Brown, Reginald C. Heber; Mrs. Brown, Raymond J. Shannon; Ginger, Earl F. Mead; Miss Brown, Adell Heber; Gaffer, Reg F. Heber; Sheriff Catchern, Jolly Jenero; Display No. 3, The City of Dogville, Rob H. Heber, Trainer; Display No. 4, Mexican Joe, and Arizona Kid, Fancy and Trick Roping and wonderful exhibition with the Australian Cattle Whip, 22ft. long; Display No. 5, The Dalmos Troupe, Trapeze Artists; Display No. 6, Clown Band; Display No. 7, The Franklins, Iron Jaw Aerialists; Display No. 8, Rollo and Geo. Heber, Roman Ring Gymnasts; Display No. 9, King's Performing Bears and

The band playing a pre-show concert. The end of the big top was screened off with a back drop and side wall.



Dogs; Display No: 10, The Adell Sisters, International Dances; Display No. 11 Rollo H. Heber's Performing Ponies, Dogs and Monkeys. I witnessed the performance here and again at Reynoldsburg, Ohio. It is just right for the places exhibited and there

are acts really new and original that will develop and finally be found in the Big, Three-Ringed affairs.

"The Executive Staff: Reginald C. Heber, Gen. Mgr.; Reg F. Heber, Ass't Mgr.; Rollo H. Heber, Equestrian Director; Geo. T. Heber, Master Transportation; R. E. Heber, Treas.; Benj. C. Heber, Gen. Advance; Robt. B. Congdon, Special Advance; Philip J. Straus, Boss billposter; Earl F. Mead, Supt. Canvas; Jesse L. White, Supt. Privileges; E. A. Cloverstone, Supt. Side Show; William C. Rathburn, Supt. Lights; James W. Masters; Supt. draft stock; John B. Rafferty, Supt. ring stock; Frank Warren, Supt. properties; Wesley Burris, Supt. Harness. 'Dad' Musselman, with whom I trooped in days gone, a true circus man, has charge of the cook tent and kitchen. Say, he is some cook. My good wife and I certainly will ever remember the meal on the lot at Reynoldsburg.

"Heber Brothers feed right.

"I almost forgot to mention the most important personage, the press agent. He is the brother-in-law of the Heber Bros. Frank McKinney is. his name. His stories just have to have space; a newspaper can't close the door on them. It has been written me that it is hard to land space now because the papers are giving so much space to war news. Simple enough: Shape stories to meet the

demand. McKinney did that here. If you cater and play to the policy of a newspaper, and know the general characteristics of the "boss" of the journal, and reach him, will someone rise and explain how, your stories can be discarded?

"I find the married folks with the trick thus: Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Heber, Mr. and



Mrs. Rollo Heber, Mr. and Mrs., Reginald D. Heber, Mr. and Mrs. Reginald C. Heber, Mr. and Barth, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Clark, and Mr. and Mrs. Ray Dick The latter manage the side show, and Mrs. Ben Heber is ahead of the show with her husband. Together the married people have a group of children, sweet and interesting.

"There are 27 wagons and 120 head of horses. On lots and parade, it has the flash. It is the Barnum of the towns it plays. The start and growth of the Heber Bros., reminds me of the Ringlings. And mark you this: One of the Heber boys married a relative of the Ringlings. So you see it is sort of in the family and I could not better close than saying blood will tell."

The April 3, 1909 *Billboard* contained this advertisement: "Heber Bros. Greater Show wants lady and gent aerial team, contortionist and Minstrel men doing two or more turns, double in B & O preferred. Tuba to double violin, also cornetist. Describe fully, lowest salary. Address 288 17th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio."

This note appeared in the October 16, 1909 *New York Clipper*: "Heber Bros. Greater Tent Show will be at their headquarters at 288 E Seventeenth Avenue, Columbus, Ohio, after a successful tour of three thousand miles in the Western states, They will winter their people, horses and wagons at the same headquarters."

#### 1910

The Issac Marcks notes say the show opened in Columbus on May 2.

However, this was a later opening than in other years. Interestingly the



Three Heber Bros. wagons on the road from one town to another.

circus returned to its home town for another stand on September 20.

The performers in 1910 included the Flying LaVans; the acrobatic Franklins; Roy Raymond, contortionist; the Jeffersons, gymnasts; Bruce Burnes, Scottish novelty; Lew Wilson, slack wire and Will Hutchins, Guigri Webster and George Talmadge clowns; plus the Heber animal acts.

#### 1911

This article appeared in the January 14, 1911 *Billboard*: "Heber Bros. have purchased a large tract of land located in Columbus, upon which they will build quarters for the accommodation of their show, For the last five years they have occupied the old Sells Bros.' winter quarters in Columbus. Heber Brothers have placed orders for new tents, and seats. Several new wagons are under construction."

The March 18, 1911 *Billboard* published this Heber staff listing: "Reginald C. Heber, general manag-

A large 1911 Heber Bros. Circus billboard.

er; R. F. Heber, assistant manager; R. E. Heber, treasurer; George T. Heber, master of transportation; Benjamin C. Heber, general agent; James Bickens, superintendent of privileges; R. F. Heber, musical director; Edward Green, boss hostler; A. R. Heber, superintendent of commissary department; Frank Ward, superintendent of lights; Charles Faste, superintendent of properties; and Lew Topper, superintendent of ring stock."

#### 1912

The May 25, 1912 *New York Clipper* published this article: "Heber Bros. Greater Show opened at Columbus Ohio on May 2 and 3 to good business, afternoons and nights. Many visitors from other circuses attended each performance. Every performer and musician was on hand when the whistle blew, there not being a single disappointment. The five new advance wagons started three week ahead of the opening date.

In speaking of the opening, the *Columbus Dispatch* said: "There are many Hebers operating this circus. One no sooner becomes use to seeing a Heber shake the tambourine than you behold him a farmer clad in jeans; no sooner has one exhibited a troupe of trained dogs than the next behold him clad in tights and swinging on the rings; it is like a fascinating game, and one thinks of a paraphrase which goes. 'Hebers, Hebers everywhere, and not a one shirks.'

"The circus has one ring, and there are clowns who disport merrily in the manner of years ago; there is slapstick comedy, slack wire walking, trapeze work, ponies, donkeys, bears, monkeys, a troupe of very clever dogs, and Mr. Heber, Sr., who is the most versatile being alive. From bass drum to tambourine, from one character to another of this 'greatest show on earth, is everywhere present.

"Two of the daughters sing and do some very graceful dancing, assisting in other ways to make this circus a success."





The March 23, 1912 *Billboard* published this staff listing: "Heber Bros. Greater Show. Reg Heber reserved seat tickets; Arthur Laughrey, superintendent of canvas; George T. Heber, trainmaster, Smiley Hitchcock, boss hostler; Jack Richardson, superintendent of commissary department; Fred Watts, light superintendent; Walter Larimer, superintendent of properties; Milton Harris, superintendent of ring stock; James E. Ramsey, manager of advertising wagon No. 1; Frank Walters, manager of No. 2 advertising wagon; Bill Bowers, manager of advertising wagon No. 3; A. W. Henderson, announcer. Show opens at Columbus, Ohio May 2."

27th Annual Tour

# HEBER BROS. GREATER SHOW

3 BIG SHOWS COMBINED



CIRCUS MINSTRELS VAUDEVILLE

50 PERFORMERS, ARTISTS AND CLOWNS  
PERFORMING PONIES, DOGS AND MONKEYS

2—FREE BAND CONCERTS DAILY—2

—SHOW RAIN OR SHINE—  
UNDER MAMMOTH WATERPROOF TENT  
SEATS 2,000 PEOPLE. 25,000 Candle Power of Light used

Prices of Admission: 25c, Children under 12 years 15c  
The Show You Know One Day Only

Under Waterproof Tent W. Main St.  
**Saturday, May 20, 1911**  
Afternoon at 2:15. Night at 8:15

"Besides these and bareback riding and trapeze feats, the show carries a large number of performing dogs, bears, monkeys and other animals.

"One of the attractions in the animal tent is the now famous baby monkey, the only one, it is claimed, that was ever born in captivity. The mother of this little animal carries it in her arms very much as the human carries its babies.

"Matinees will be given Monday, Thursday and Saturday afternoon and on Monday and Thursday afternoon the management has offered to admit any inmate of any charitable institution free of charge. It will be necessary for the heads of these institutions to make application for their tickets."

1913

This article appeared in the January 3, 1913 *New York Clipper*: "As usual at this season of the year the training barns and winter quarters and show printing headquarters of Heber Bros. Circus Wild West and Menagerie is the busiest place on earth.

"The lithos, all of special designs, all tents will be larger and seating capacity will be enlarged. New show autos have been purchased for rapid transport to and from the lots and will greatly to the appearance of their many beautiful horses and wagons.

"Two of the latest designed circus privilege wagons have been purchased and they are adding to their already fine collection of animals in their menagerie. There are many importations of wild animals, gay plumaged birds and reptiles.

"Last year's wagons are getting gold leaf decorations with brilliant colors to match, and we are adding a new lot of elegant wagons, chariots and cages.

"Two new limousine cars will go overland with railroad speed to inspect all country roads billing for

A typical Heber Bros. Circus newspaper ad. John Polacsek collection.

this show."

This article appeared in *Columbus Dispatch* on February 20, 1915: "The circus season was officially opened in Columbus Monday night, when 'Pop' Heber and his wonderful aggregation of performers entertained a crowd which packed the huge big top to the utmost, at Sandusky Street and Sullivan Avenue.

"The Heber brothers have secured a number of new acts, and quite an aggregation of clever clowns, some of them having been with larger circuses before this year."

This article appeared in the *Columbus Dispatch* on April 28, 1913: "Heber Brothers' Greater Shows are encamped on the ground between Indianola Park and the Smith pavilion, and will exhibit to Columbus audiences during the entire week, commencing Monday afternoon.

"The show has grown since its last appearance in Columbus and, many new and attractive features have been added. Circus, cowboys, Indian and equestrian acts are included in the daily programs.

The season opened in Columbus April 28 to May 3. It closed on October 4 in South Charleston, Ohio.

On December 22 1913 Reginold C. Heber wrote to the National Printing and Engraving Co.: "Please enter our order for the following. 100 one-sheets flats, portraits. 100 one-sheet uprights. 100 one-sheet flats, Dogville. 100 one-sheet, ponies, Above at 4 cents a sheet title at 2 cents a sheet. 100 four sheet portraits at 62 cents a piece."

1914

The Heber show never had an elephant. But Reg Heber was thinking about one. On January 20, 1914 he wrote to William P. Hall: "Yours at hand stating you have an elephant for sale, please tell height male or female. Whether tame or outlaw and what its height and weight is and lowest price.

"And I also want a little one. Do you know of any little ones." However, Heber did not buy an elephant.

This article appeared in the February 7, 1914 *Billboard*: "Reginald C. Heber, Jr., organized his circus about thirty years ago in Syracuse, New York and played the



same territory covered by Ringling Bros., Barnum & Bailey, Van Amburg and others in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Northern and southern Peninsula of Michigan, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Iowa, Kansas, Indiana, and Illinois.

"About seventeen years ago he moved his family from Syracuse, New York to Columbus, Ohio, and the brothers, being too young to join the show were placed in schools there. One after another they graduated and took their appointed places with the show. Ben C. Heber, the oldest, was the first to graduate and was placed as head executive of the advance and press department of the show. Reg. C. Heber, Jr., came next as assistant manager, who systematized all movements of the show. The other brothers were placed in equally important positions as they grew up. All the brothers are thorough musicians as well as skilled printers, having their printing plant at the quarters at Columbus.

"The Heber Bros., Circus, Wild West and Menagerie is today one of the fastest growing tented organizations."

The same *Billboard* noted: "Heber Bros. Shows. Work is progressing rapidly on Heber Bros. at the winter quarters in Columbus, Ohio.

"The side show will be enlarged and many wild animals added.

"New show automobiles, trucks and late designed privilege wagons, together with many other new show wagons and chariots, will be added.

"Fred Lock, with his workingmen, is putting a coat of red paint on all wagons used last year.

"No acts used last year will be re-engaged. All will be new, and the advertising will be of new and original designs. No stock paper will be used. Heber Bros. own a show printing house, used exclusively for themselves, is running daily, getting out thousands of flashy designs of all sizes, to be used the coming season.

"The heavy draft horses, mules, trick donkeys, and heavy wagons are on the Heber farm, ten miles north of Columbus. The printing office and training barns are near their residence.



The advance bill posting crew posed in front of this 1914 bill stand.

"Some beautiful leaping grayhounds have just arrived.

"The giant monkey, Jocco, has proved a wonder. Jacco will be used in a new animal act next season.

"Our grand entry was good last year, but watch it in 1914."

This article was published in the *Columbus Dispatch* just prior to the opening of the 1914 season. "Heber Bros. Circus, Wild West and Menagerie, which claims the title of

Cover of program published for the 1914 Columbus stands. Circus World Museum collection.

the 'biggest and best 15 and 25-cent show in the world, will give its opening performance on the Billy Sunday tabernacle site, on Goodale Street, Monday, April 27. Scores of brilliant new acts have been engaged for the 1914 season and will make their Columbus debut on the date mentioned.

"The new thrillers include several troupes of 'flying' acrobats, men and women trapeze artists, wire walkers who do things and many surprising animal acts.

"A troupe of Mexican bronco busters busters will give exhibitions of sharp shooting wild horse taming; lariat throwing and bull whip target work. This latter attraction has never before been seen in Columbus and is rarely shown outside of South America. The whips used are more than forty feet long.

"Funny clowns will amuse the children with their ridiculous antics, while the 'dance of all nations' by the ballet, and the trained dogs and ponies, will add to the enjoyment. Other animal acts featured with the show include trained bears, monkeys and leopards. Several monkeys assist in the great fire scene in which thirty dogs, in fireman's uniforms extinguish a blazing residence, rescue puppies from the lames, and in fact do everything that a trained fire fighter might do, except the fire loss.


"Two big bands and a clown band will furnish the music."

The season opened in Columbus and played from April 27 to May 2. A printed program listed these acts: Band concert; grand entry; William A. Wagner, slack wire walker; clown statue act; Dogville; Mexican Joe and Arizona Lid, trick roping; Dalmos Troupe, the

Cor. Goodale and Park Sts.  
**Week of April 27**  
 Season 1914. Two Performances Daily

**LARGEST AND BEST  
 15 and 25c SHOW  
 ON EARTH.**


**HEBER BROS.  
 GREATER SHOWS**



**PROGRAM**

**CIRCUS  
 WILD WEST &  
 MENAGERIE**  
 Under Waterproof Tents

FREE EXHIBITION AND  
 BAND CONCERT BEFORE  
 EACH PERFORMANCE.





opening. Mildred Johnson is busy on the wardrobe. Frank Smith is turning out new sets of harness. Roy LaVere, producing clown will again be with the show, this making his second season, as will Earl Mead, clown, the aerial Snells and Tony Wright and Edmund Meslon, musicians."

#### 1915

In January or February the Hebers presented a winter circus at the Hartman Theater in Columbus. The 1915 performances were given on Monday and Tuesday January 18-19. This is the program of the show in 1915.

1. Old Plantation Minstrels. Interlocutor-Roy Franklin; Endmen, George T. Heber, Ed. Fox, Bill Smith, Earl Meeks.

2. The Adell Sisters, Tango Dancing. (The Adell Sisters were Avanell Heber, wife of Reg Heber and Adella Gill-Heber wife of George Heber.)

3. The Franklins, Black Eccentrics

4. Silver, the Educated Pony. Introducing Giant Rhesus Monkeys and Dogs in Bareback Riding.

5. The Adell Sisters, International Dancers.

6. DeOcea, The Man of Mystery

7. Aerial LaVons, Trapeze and Roman Ring Gymnasts.

8. Jeffersons, in Playlet. "Vacation Time."

9. Rollo H. Heber's Acting Dogs and Monkeys In Playlet, "City of Dogville"

10. The Heber Bros. in their Farce War Comedy "On The Firing Line."

This feature article on "Pop" Heber appeared in the *Columbus Dispatch* on February 20, 1915. It tells of Pop Heber's start in show business: "Pop" Heber is R. C. Heber, he is 55 years old and was born in Albany, New York. His father was the Rev. G. Stowe Heller, a Methodist minister and his grandfather was the Rev. Eighmey Heber a pioneer Methodist minister who used to preach between New York and Albany in pioneer days. 'Pop' had a splendid education, but while in college he decided to go into business for himself and purchased a newspaper and job printing office in Auburn, New York.

"He continued in this business for a number of years and became a

member of the Owasco Lake Yacht club. He owned seven boats at one time, including racing boats, a steam yacht, and a sailboat. He became such, a devotee to water sports that he went into contests of allkinds and emerged with medals, ribbons, cups and, honors to satisfy the most ardent sportsman.

"Less than 40 years ago he married Abbie Rose Corlies. 'Pop' wouldn't say much about his courting days, but points to the fact that his parents-in-law were his friends. Mrs. Heber was not asked about when she married 'Pop' and for that reason the reporter was unable to secure the exact date of their marriage. 'Pop' refers to times back as 'about' which is like all men.

"After 'Pop' and Mrs. Heber had been married several years, and their oldest boys were attending the mature ages of 5 and 8, an English couple remarked to 'Pop' that they thought the Heber family talents could be better applied to amusing others, and as there was money in traveling shows at that time, 'Pop' and Mrs. Heber commenced to cast around and view the amusement situation. The boys could play the piano, 'Pop' was adept at playing musical instruments and Mrs. Heber was fitted to manage the 'troupe.'

Heber Bros. Circus used this herald. Circus World Museum collection.

"Accordingly, one summer's vacation saw the Heber show started out on a steam yacht, playing the towns in New York located on the rivers, lakes and canals from New York and Albany to Oswego. The Heber boys made themselves generally useful even on the yacht by helping to steer. The boat would dock at some town and wagons would haul the show folks and trunks and

properties to the opera houses. A Yuan in advance of the show advertised it's coming, so that a good crowd was assured. 'Pop' said their first venture was such a success that the following summer saw them making other territory. In time the Heber family had toured the Adirondacks, the Catskills, the Niagara Falls section and some of the eastern states. There were animal and musical acts, vaudeville and stereopticon pictures in the show.

"Pop' claims the distinction of being one of the first men to see the possibility of motion pictures. Thirty years ago, he declared, he used two stereopticon machines on a curtain. By means of dissolvers and trick pictures, he was able to show, in a very crude manner, trains crossing bridges, boats seemingly traveling and persons moving. His audience went wild with enthusiasm over the innovation.

"One time 'Pop' was to give his show near Syracuse and was waited upon by a number of Onondaga Indian chiefs, who asked him to give a show on their reservation, 11 miles, from Syracuse. 'Pop' consented and

took possession of the tribe's council hail, a large, roomy structure. Mr. Heber says that when 8:15--the time of the show's beginning--arrived, not an Indian was in sight, but the chiefs who were acting as ticket-takers and general overseers of the crowd. 'Pop' worried about the matter and spoke, to the chiefs, who declared their people were ready, but as they did not know the time when the show started, would be late in arriving. 'Pop' went out in the open and fired two revolvers into the air, at the same time his drummer playing loudly on a drum. Within five minutes, Mr. Heber declares, that the council hail was packed and jammed with Indians. The show was a great



success and the Indians went wild with enthusiasm.

"After traveling about for a number of years, 'Pop' moved the family to Columbus, so that Mrs. Heber could be near her father, who lived near Atlanta, in Pickaway County. This occurred 20 years ago (1895). Since then the Heber family has made Columbus its headquarters.

"The Hebers have toured in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Canada. The show developed into a dog and pony circus after Rollo Heber became an animal trainer.

"Pop' says he wouldn't trade his job for anything else in the world. He says members of his family enjoy it and live on 'the fat of the land.' At the same time being welcomed into the towns by the mayors, councilmen and everyone else, includes of course every urchin. The best ladies come out to see us.

"Pop' says the Heber 'Brothers' circus has made money every year. They carry two chefs, waiters, cook tent and dining tent, and have white linen tablecloths, white napkins and all the what-knots of a regular circus. The show consisted of between 20 and 25 wagons on tour in the country."

The 1915 season opened in Columbus on April 5. An article in the April 6 *Columbus Dispatch* stated the show played a lot on the west side of the city. The performers listed were the Aerial Snells, trapeze and iron-jaw; the Adell Sisters, rolling globes; March, Earl, Young and LaVere, acrobats; Dynomite, the unrideable mule; Carman's bears; horses, ponies and dogs.

After two days the circus moved to three additional Columbus lots.

#### 1916

A note in the March 11, 1916 *Billboard* stated the Hebers had bought the A. W. Robinson show.

The Heber Bros. Circus opened the 1916 season on May 1-2 on a downtown lot in Columbus. Another downtown lot was played May 3-4. A third Columbus lot near the Ohio State University was played May 5-6.

The staff was basically the same as in 1915.

An update on the Heber's 1916 season appeared in the September 16 *Billboard*: "Although it rained almost every day during the months of May and June sending 'home' many big and little shows, the Heber Bros. had filled every date, giving matinee and night performances. The fact that most of the people at each performance remain for the concert is sufficient evidence that the show is giving great satisfaction. The circus will close the season about October 1, and during the winter the acts will be booked with indoor circuses."

#### 1917

The January 5, 1917 *Billboard* reported: "Pop' Heber and the Heber brothers are meeting with great success in opera houses this winter, producing fourteen big acts, including their troupe of Shetland ponies, a giant monkey and dogs. Arriving from the North at Columbus, Ohio, December 24, they prepared a Christmas tree and turkey dinner for the entire troupe.

"The Heber Bros. Greater Tent Show, in the spring will be new in every respect, says manager R. C. Heber."

During the spring and summer nothing appeared in the *Billboard* about Heber Bros. However, the August 25 *Billboard* provided this information: "The Heber Bros. Show will start on its theater tour the early part of September. All of its animal acts are engaged until that time at parks and fairs.

"The Heber brothers have spared no time or expense in making their show the largest and most elaborate of any which they have ever produced.

"The program consists of the following twelve high class feature acts: Rollo Heber's Acting Dogs in 'City of Dogville, assisted by Miss Mildred

and Charles Hall; DeOcea, the Man of Mystery; Miss Avanel, in her novelty revolving globe act; Sir Royal and Princess, Giant rhesus performing monkeys; the Adell Sisters, clever and dainty singers and dancers; the Jeffersons in playlets; Peppo and Buster, producing clowns; the Minstrel Men, Fox, Henderson, Morrison and Franklin; the Aerial LaVons, the Heber brothers sax jazz band; the Acrobatic Franklins and Heber's Military Band and Orchestra; Rollo Heber's performing ponies, equestrian monks and dogs."

War I conditions had created problems for the Heber circus in 1916. With the United States entering World War One in 1917 'Pop' Heber was forced plan a 1917 season that would keep his tented circus close to

home-base in Columbus. Various lots in Columbus were played. Indianolia Amusement Park was shown under canvas on June 2. Moving on system baggage cars the show played theaters in Indiana, Illinois and Iowa. The big under canvas date of the season was the Ohio State Fair August 27 to 31.

Reg Heber ran this ad in the *Billboard* wanting people for a winter theater tour. Circus World Museum collection.

Little is known about the overall success of the 1917 season. But it surely was not up to prior seasons. Looking for further govern-

ment re-striction in 1918 as the war heated up Pop Heber decided to close his circus and concentrate on his growing printing business. Nothing is know about the disposition of the circus equipment. It was likely stored on the Heber winter quarters farm where the animals and equipment had been kept over the years.

The title and some equipment was later sold to George Christy who toured a baggage car circus using the Heber title in 1919.

**HEBER BROS**  
**GREATER SHOW**

CIRCUS ACTS, MINSTRELS,  
VAUDEVILLE

**12--BIG, CLASSY FEATURES--12**  
**BAND AND ORCHESTRA**

This show is on the new style of big productions with special scenery—a surprise every minute—and has been a big money getter Seasons 1913-14-15-16-17.

**WANTED FOR SEASON 1917-18**  
Good Novelty Acts, Musicians for Band and Orchestra, first-class, hustling Agent (give experience and reference in first letter).

**HEBER BROS.**  
912 E. 17th Avenue, COLUMBUS, OHIO



# A History Of Animal Shows At The Saint Louis Zoo

By Jim Alexander

*This paper was presented at the 2001 Circus Historical Society Convention.*

In the early 1900s it was not unusual for zoo keepers to have one or more of their charges trained for special appearances for patrons who might offer the keeper a gratuity. Many zoos had a few featured animals that performed or that were conditioned to be touched by visitors. The developing Saint Louis Zoo had two very popular animals, both former circus performers, that keepers would display out of their enclosures. Miss Jim, an adult female Asiatic elephant purchased from William Hall of Lancaster, Missouri, gave rides until her retirement in 1942. A four-year-old orangutan, Sam, was purchased in 1918 from a circus in San Francisco. At 3:00 PM on days the weather permitted, keeper/trainer Max Mall would have the orangutan ride his velocipede from his cage at the Lion House down to the refreshment stand for an ice cream cone. The popularity of this attraction, along with the probable increase in ice cream sales as the visitors joined the orang in a treat, was not lost on Zoo Superintendent George Vierheller. The anthropomorphic novelty of both a performing orangutan and later a young chimpanzee, Henry Kiel (named for the Mayor) often inspired newspaper stories and publicity for the new Zoo. Superintendent Vierheller, who considered himself a showman as well as an administrator, had a stage built as part of the new Primate House to feature trained apes. The Saint Louis Zoo was in show business almost from the beginning.

On September 24, 1924 the Primate House was site of a formal

dinner before it was opened to the public. There was no show but Sam dressed in formal attire, was seated next to the Mayor. It was reported the orangutan behaved well and cleaned his plate of sliced bananas. In 1925 Sam's trainer, Max Mall, had started a show with three young chimpanzees, Mike, Duffy, and Henry Kiel on the stage. Little is said about what behaviors were presented. Just seeing young chimpanzees dressed as children and performing a few basic tricks was a unique experience in the day. R. Marlin Perkins, then the young Curator of Reptiles, related that when Mall was asked what it took to train chimpanzees, he replied in his German accent, "You just have to be a little bit smarter." Max Mall continued to present the chimpanzee shows through 1931. Mike, the star.

The animal amphitheater at the St. Louis Zoo. Author's collection.

of the group, died in 1931 and maturing Duffy and Henry Kiel were sold to the Dallas, Texas Zoo. Another keeper-trainer, Cassius "Cash" Ferguson took over as trainer in 1932.

Cash Ferguson, a former cowboy and hunter, joined the Zoo in 1929. His 1932 show featured two chimpanzees, Sammy and Billy. Their routine included bicycle riding, tightrope walking, roller-skating, military drill, and featured a popular boxing match that Sammy always won. Because of the large crowds in the Primate House, up to seven shows a day were presented each day. There were some attempts at outdoor shows but when the trainer would turn his head the chimps would climb up the nearby trees. Plans were developed for an outdoor stage with a roof to contain the active apes and offer viewing for more visitors. At the same time, more shows were being developed.





On June 9, 1932 the *St. Louis Star* reported that Vierheller considered showmanship as the principle reason for the success of the Saint Louis Zoo. He made a circus out of the Zoo, "rather than a collection of musty specimens." That year, Mike Kostial, Sr., a utility keeper at the Zoo and former circus trainer, had returned from a year working at Benson's Wild Animal Farm in Nashua, New Hampshire. Benson's was the American branch for the Hagenbeck animal dealers of Germany. Benson and Hagenbeck would hire trainers such as Kostial to train acts to sell to shows and circuses. Vierheller wanted to do much the same, referring to Zoo performances as "Animal Training Shows." Kostial began a young training or "kindergarten" group with a pair of three-month-old lion cubs and a leopard cub. Later in the year Kostial and his colleague, Richard Havermann, began working with six young sea lions.

The animal training shows were greatly expanded in 1933. Cash Ferguson's Sammy and Billy chimpanzee show was the feature. Also at the Primate House, Leon Smith began working with four young chimpanzees, Percy, Jack, Krool, and Lady in a kindergarten, or training, show. In an arena near the Lion House, Mike Kostial was presenting a lion show with young lions and a leopard. The sea lion show was presented on an enclosed stage, east of the Eagle Cage. Richard Havermann had five young animals, Fifi, Baby, Tosca, Jennie, and Nellie. Their routine included climbing ladders, clapping flippers, balancing rubber balls, and riding a tricycle. This was the only year for a sea lion show until 1970. Havermann left the Zoo and eventually trained animals at the San Diego Zoo. While there he was attacked by a bear he was training and died in 1943 as a result of the injuries.

Over the winter of 1933-1934 the lions were trained in the Ostrich House. The 1934 Lion Show featured a tricycle riding lion (maybe a prop left from the sea lion show). There was also a kindergarten act featuring three lion cubs, a bear, and a young baboon. The show was presented by the trainer's son Mike Kostial, Jr.,



The elephant act in 1952. Pfening Archives.

when he was not occupied at his other job picking up soda bottles. That year, too, Cash Ferguson's Sammy and Billy and Leon Smith's kindergarten chimps were still very popular attractions in the Primate House.

The Zoo had a performing gorilla, Yonnah a six-year-old female, that worked with Sammy and Billy in 1935. In addition to the obvious promotional attraction, the Zoo felt the exercise of doing the show might enrich the gorilla's quiet behavior. Yonnah dressed in brown overalls and a knit cap, played the role of

Part of the chimp show in 1952. Pfening Archives.



"stooge" to the active chimps. Unfortunately, Yonnah died in the winter of 1935-36 after several bouts of pneumonia.

Another major year in Zoo show history was 1937. The first trainer, Max Mall, 60, died in February. His successor, Cash Ferguson was still working with Sammy and Billy, but Director Vierheller was worried about their size and temperament. On June 30 the Director canceled the show, Ferguson resigned shortly after and moved to California. Leon Smith's kindergarten chimpanzee group had become very popular and graduated to become the main show. Smith's group of six chimpanzees was performing in a barred cage just east of the Eagle Cage (approximately the area of the west end of Lakeside Cafe). The show chimps were housed in the basement of the Reptile House. This space was also their winter training area. Another kindergarten chimp group of two animals was started with new full-time trainer, 19-year-old Mike Kostial, Jr. His father Mike, Sr. was still presenting the lion show. (Zoo personnel of this era refer to the Kostials as Big Mike and Little Mike) Kostial Sr. was working with a group of three tigers and a group of six young lions and two leopards. His finish trick was a laydown with all the animals as he fed them cubes of meat. Another show, with elephants, was added this season.

Floyd Smith had been a hoof stock keeper at the Zoo when Marlin Perkins came on board in 1926. On May 25, 1936, a year-old female Asiatic elephant named for Clara Belle Walsh, a St. Louis socialite,



arrived at the Zoo's Antelope House. With help from Leon Smith, Floyd taught Clara Belle a seven-minute routine that was presented on a non-formal schedule in the summer of 1936. The baby elephant's featured behavior was brushing her toenails.

Based on the popularity of Clara Belle two more elephants, Marian and Vi, were purchased in December to train for a show for the 1937 season. The 1937 routine consisted of dance steps, pyramids (mounts), playing the drum, etc. in the far west yard of the Camel Barn. The 1938 edition added a controversial routine of elephants drinking from metal bottles and then acting tipsy. The Anti-Saloon League protested the offensive behavior but the Zoo Board approved the routine by a five-to-four vote.

The Chimpanzee Show in the late 1930s was known as "Jackie and His Gang." In 1937, Jackie became the first chimp to ever learn to ride a unicycle. As a sign of the time, the 1942 Zoo Album carried a picture of Jackie sitting at a table smoking with the caption, "a spot of tea and a fag to soothe the jaded nerves." In 1940, ponies and a dog were added to the chimpanzee show for the first time. Chimps did bareback riding behaviors with the ponies including the popular table exchange. The table exchange had the ponies trotting under high-legged tables as a chimpanzee rider hopped up on the table replaced by the chimpanzee on the table. A baby chimp, Sailor, rode the dog, a mix-breed great dane named Suki.

The shows underwent great revision in 1942. Mike Kostial, Sr. attempted to go on with the lion show while battling cancer. Vierheller canceled the show on June 19 when Mike was unable to continue. Mike did return for a Zoo movie on July 17, and tried to finish the season. Mike Kostial Sr. died in the winter of 1942 and Zoo leadership thought there would not be a lion show for the next several seasons.

On a more positive note, two baby elephants, Honey and Lady, were added to Floyd Smith's show in June. Director Vierheller believed they would replace the older animals but after they arrived the size difference



Jules Jacot's big act in 1954. Pfening Archives.

between the newcomers and the veteran performers appealed to him and all five stayed in the show. The Chimpanzee Show opened the new Arena with a claimed capacity of three thousand seats and standing room for another one thousand. (In the 1970s when tickets were sold the capacity was found to be closer to less-than two thousand seats with room for two or three hundred guests in the standing section.) The Arena had a double water-filled moat to contain the performers. A connected tunnel to the Ape House from backstage under the moat and seats and on to the chimps' cages. Leon Smith's show had 12 chimpanzees, five ponies, and Suki. Assistant trainer Henry Ternes recalled that Suki would keep the young chimps on their places until they got to be six or seven years old and found that they didn't have to listen to her.

With the loss of Mike Kostial Sr. and his assistant away in military service, the Lion Show was not scheduled when the 1943 season opened. But when Jules arrived here on July 13, the Show had a belated start. Jacot came to the Zoo following several years working in his in-laws' large carnival that was based in Mexico. Jacot was 53. He

was born in New York City, had worked circuses, including the American Circus Corporation shows, since 1908. By the end of the July he had obtained 12 lions and a tiger to begin training in public. By 1945 Jacot's big cat show had thirteen lions, two tigers, two brown bears, and a year old polar bear that rode a hobby-horse. The 1945 Elephant Show included a barber shop routine with one elephant "shaving" another --with an unusual twist. A fight would break out at the barber shop during a craps game ending with an elephant chasing her adversary with a razor.

Leon Smith was working only nine chimpanzees because of the retirement of some big males and the difficulty in obtaining replacements. Smith was dismissed on Labor Day and the rest of the season was canceled, but only temporarily. Pvt. Henry Ternes, former assistant trainer, was home on leave from military service and offered to work the Show for the remaining two weeks of the season. Ben Fridrich took over the chimpanzee show in 1946. In mid-season 1947, Mike Kostial, Jr. returned from the service and joined Fridrich as co-trainer.

In 1953, Honey, one of the younger elephants, couldn't perform due to an arthritic foot. She would stand at the edge of the ring while the others per-



formed. Honey died in mid-July. Jules Jacot was working 16 lions, one tiger, two brown bears, and had added three pumas. The Zoo staff felt the bears were too dangerous and after the season they never appeared again.

During the 1954 season Jacot worked nine male and 11 female lions with one tiger. The Chimpanzee Show's feature was the star, Roy, appearing as "Liberchimpski" complete with Brother George and candelabra. The Elephant Show added at least two goats in elephant masks performing elephant-like behaviors with the four remaining pachyderm performers. The major elephant news was the Elephant Show's total change of animal cast members.

Vierheller suggested that the veteran show elephants were too old and that the public was tired of their tricks. He secured a donation of \$30,000 from Anheuser-Busch for eight baby elephants to present "the greatest elephant act in the world." The first group of four arrived at Jungleland, Thousand Oaks, CA in the spring of 1954. The other four came in the fall and Floyd Smith began training in California. The act appeared inspired by the Polack Bros. Circus Besalou Baby Elephants, trained by "Mac" MacDonald. The nine-minute routine consisted of liberty drills, mounts, and even a one-foot stand. In the spring the act was trucked to St. Louis, stopping to present shows for some A-B distributors. The act arrived at the Zoo on April 15. The old act of four plus Jill-an exhibit elephant was sold to Paul Kelly of Peru, Indiana for \$10,000. He sent Bert Pettus to pick up the elephants on March 23, 1955. Pettus and the Zoo crew spent two days loading the five animals. According to Kelly, the elephants had tuberculosis and never left Peru.

The new elephant show was presented in the arena built for the Lion Show. The elevated stage was not barred, but did have rails around the edge to prevent accidents. Floyd and four assistants presented the eight babies.



Jules Jacot and one of his tigers. Author's collection.

Over at the Chimpanzee Arena, Roy of "Liberchimpski" fame was the first chimp to clear the moats and view his friends from the public seating. He returned to the stage without incident and electric fencing was added the moat barrier. At the old Lion Show Arena, Jacot presented his largest show with 20 lions and three tigers. The summer was especially hot and Jules wore shorts while working the cats: Vierheller billed him as "the only trainer willing to expose his knees." This was to be Jacot's last season at the Zoo for a while. He and Vierheller had disagreements about money, consulting about the new building and animals, and over publicity. The money disagreement was based on the system that trainers did receive a salary but could increase their earnings by selling souvenirs. Jacot and Vierheller didn't come to an agreement for the Show but the Zoo did sell Jacot 15 lions and one tiger that were moved to Paul Kelly's Indiana farm. Jacot was officially terminated January 3, 1956, when he failed to report for work.

For the 1956 season the Zoo hired George Fraser, 27; a former assistant for well known animal acts, Pallenberg's bears and Proske's tigers, to train animals for a new lion show. Vierheller wanted a faster pace and more humor, a show that wouldn't scare the children. Fraser, with help from Mike Kostial and cat keeper Mike Kuszak, trained seven lions, a tiger, and a sun bear cub for

the act. The baby elephants were still performing at the Lion Arena awaiting completion of the Elephant House and Arena. The elephants were dressed in overall outfits and did a square dance routine as part of their 20-minute show. The Chimpanzee Show's set and first-ever curtain were designed by Fred Conway of the Washington University Art Department in a "Showboat" theme.

1957 was another year with several changes. George Fraser had been dismissed at the end of the 1956 season and it seemed that the Zoo might have to rent a cat act. However on January 2, 1957, Dick McGraw was hired. McGraw, 24, had five-years' experience working with veteran trainers Frank Phillips and Mabel Stark at Jungleland in California. Vierheller now wanted a "vaudeville-type act, bring in some, take them off, and bring in others." McGraw worked with two tigers, three-two-year old lions, four lion cubs, a cheetah, and the sun bear from Fraser's act. In May the Zoo rented two performing lions from a Jungleland act that had played the Police Circus.

The Elephant House and Arena was completed in mid-summer and the Elephant Show opened on July 15. The baby elephants' show was themed, "the Little Guests From Siam." At the Chimpanzee Show Mike Kostial was listed as the only trainer although Zoo records show he did have assistants. Ben Fridrich was referred to as a keeper when pictured with a gorilla in December 1957. Kostial hoped for another year from featured chimp, 12-year-old Roy, but when Roy tossed 185-pound assistant Henry Ternes in the moat and disrupted the opening show, he was retired. (Jules Jacot would say, "he tore-up his contract.") Before his temperamental display, Roy was known to sit in the front seat of Kostial's car and ride down to the refreshment stand for ice cream; shades of Sam the orangutan 40 years before.

In 1958 Floyd Smith added a pair



of young African elephants, Hermann and Clara Belle, to the Elephant Show. The Africans opened the show and then the eight Asians performed. Pearl Smith, Floyd's wife began seasonal work at the Zoo making the chimp costumes and elephant head pieces. She continued to make the outfits until the mid 80s.

One of the most famous chimpanzees in Zoo history arrived in October 1959. Mr. Moke was sold to the Zoo by his trainer Robert Tomarchin for \$1,575. Moke performed a number of behaviors but was best known for being able to write and say "mama." Moke spent his first weeks at Mike Kostial's home and had also acclimated to life at the Ape House. On the evening of December 21, 1959, Tomarchin broke in to Moke's cage removed the chimp, left a check for \$1,000, and a note for another \$2,000, and returned to Florida. After a trial in November, 1960, Tomarchin was sentenced to two years in the penitentiary for burglary and stealing. He was released on \$4,000 bail and headed back to Florida with the chimp. Tomarchin vowed that Moke would never go back to the Zoo and even threatened to leave the country. Tomarchin had not exhibited the chimpanzee for almost two years until he returned the chimp to an intermediary, the Miami Rare Bird Farm on September 3, 1961. The next day Moke was flown back to St. Louis. Mike Kostial took Moke out at the end of the afternoon show on September 4, to hit some baseballs and say "Mama" to make his debut. Moke would go on to appear in three full seasons of chimpanzee shows. By 1965, 10-year-old Mr. Moke didn't always get along with the other chimps or his trainers. Moke respected a larger chimp, Funny. When time came for Moke to speak and write "mama," Mike would take Moke with one hand and Funny with the other and ask Moke, "who do you like best?" His final show was on June 18 when he shoved Henry Ternes across the stage and pushed Mike Kostial through the curtain.

Eight growing elephants were too much for the 40-foot circular stage, and in 1960 the Asiatic cast was cut

to five. Eleanor went to the Muscatine, Iowa Zoo in October of 1959, but Helen and Susie didn't leave for the Cristiani Bros. Circus until August 1960. The Africans still opened the show with Clarabelle doing a plankwalk, riding a tricycle, and joining Hermann in dance steps. The ensemble was costumed; Hermann wore a motorcycle cap, Clarabelle a ponytail, and the Asiatics had sailor outfits. The break in the show, required to change performing groups, was a time problem and 1962 marked the last season the Africans performed on stage.



The chimps riding ponies. Author's collection.

Dick McGraw was dismissed near the end of the 1961 season. Vierheller sent Mike Kostial out to Jungleland to recruit Jules Jacot to return to the Zoo. Kostial's amazing diplomatic efforts had the 72-year-old Jacot return for the 1962 season. Because of his age, he worked at the Zoo as a contracted specialist, and not a Zoo employee. Jules brought his two personal lions, Pan and King Solomon (Pee Wee), with him, and would also work McGraw's act.

The chimpanzees presented a pirate themed show in 1968, with "Captain Pierre" climbing hand-over-hand down a cable to the stage from the announcer's booth at the opening. Both the elephant and lion shows would have problems later in the sea-

son. The lead elephant, Alice, became ill and couldn't perform in mid-July, so the show was canceled. In an attempt to fill an empty Arena, a hastily assembled Bird of Prey and Reptile demonstration opened in late August in the Elephant Arena. The birds were only hand-held and the animals weren't close to the audience. There were no complaints when the elephants returned, without Alice, on Labor Day. In the Lion Show, Jacot would place his arm in a lion's mouth. Danny, a large, handsome, but temperamental lion, bit down on Jules' arm during one show in August. True to form, Jacot attempted to pass it off, but his arm became infected. The show was canceled when Jules spent several days at St. John's Hospital. When he returned to the Arena he told a reporter, "being 78 makes it tougher, but only a little tougher." Zoo management was more concerned about his age.

The last great year of St. Louis Zoo Animal Shows might have been 1969. It would be the last year for Floyd Smith and the last of the A-B babies, Pumie, Trudy, Clara, and Marie. For his last few years Floyd stuck to a set routine including some of the drill work, the elephant band, and the finish; bowling, baseball, and barbershop.

This would also be the last season at the Zoo for Jules Jacot and the Lion Show. Jacot worked three groups, two lions and two tigers from the Dick McGraw era, four leopards, three pumas, and a lion--all young animals--in a training group, and his own five male lions with some unique behaviors. Beauty, one of the two female tigers in the McGraw group was injured in a fight in pre-season practice, so both girls were not used for the year. (Jules didn't much care to work another trainer's animals.) Jacot got bit again on August 18 while putting his head in a lion's mouth. When a reporter ask Jules if he would cancel the show he answered, "Ridiculous."

Mike Kostial was working 14 chimps and five ponies in the "Meet Me In St. Louis" themed show. The curtain would open and the audience saw four young chimps riding in a ferris wheel while other chimps rode



a miniature trolley car around the stage. After the big opening, the show used its time-tested routine, several chimps walking on their hands, followed by stilt walking, jump rope, bicycles, and band. The finale was pony work that ended with six chimps and four ponies going over and under two tables.

Animal shows continued in 1970, but it was never the same. Floyd Smith retired in February 1970 and died on April 16. In January, the Zoo announced Jules Jacot's "retirement." But Jacot, not one to leave quietly, let the press know he considered the move as being "fired." The tigers and five of the lions were shipped to a circus in March, while Jules kept two lions and the four leopards to perform at the Glen Oak Zoo in Peoria, IL. Mike Kostial still had a big Chimpanzee Show. Floyd Smith's elephants, plus Carolyn, a two-year-old that had performed in the Children's Zoo in 1969, were now presented by Floyd's assistant Donn Gibson. Gibson dressed the show in an East Indian theme but retained most of the show routine.

Jacot's show with 17 big cats was replaced by one young sea lion and a few psittacines. For some time the Zoo had been concerned about Jacot's age, 79, and had been considering a change. The San Diego Zoo had a successful sea lion show for many years and it became the model for the Zoo's new show. Unfortunately, the naivete in planning, and the delays in construction and animal acquisition hindered the project. Jim Alexander was selected to present the sea lions. He had served the shows as announcer, presented the bird and reptile demonstration in 1968, and trained Carolyn, the baby elephant. The first sea lions didn't arrive until January 20, 1970, the cats didn't leave the building until mid-March, and the construction of the moat wasn't finished until a few days before show preview in May. Lee Mendel, son of the Zoo's former head keeper of birds and presenter of the Grant's Farm Parrot Show, was hired to add performing birds to a predictably short Sea Lion Show. The Zoo purchased a semi-trained



The seal lion show in 1981. Author's collection.

young female sea lion in April, but she died in early June. The Sea Lion/Bird Show limped through the season that could only improve.

Lee Mendel left the Zoo in the fall of 1970, and that ended another attempt at a bird show. After a few weeks of coaching Alexander from sea lion trainers at the San Diego Zoo in the fall of 1970, the 1971 Sea Lion Show was a great improvement. By 1973, newspaper accounts referred to the Sea Lion Show as "polished," at least by comparison to its beginning days. Two sea lions, Surfer and Shortie, balanced balls, played horns, jumped hurdles in the water moat, and executed other standard sea lion show behaviors. This year, the Elephant Show added Donna, a very young calf, who came to the Zoo in September, 1971.

The big show news of 1974 was a first for all the Zoo's shows. An admission fee of \$.25 would be charged. The Zoo was in need of revenue for major capital improvements, and under its Charter could not charge admission at the gate. The shows were viewed as special attractions and, therefore, like the Children's Zoo and Zooline Railroad, could charge a fee.

Unlike the Children's Zoo, there was no legal opposition to this move but it was not popular with the media. To ease public concern, the Friday Chimpanzee Show and Sea Lion Show were free. There were no accurate records of show attendance in previous years, but the admission charge didn't prevent many visitors from seeing the shows. The Sea Lion Show added another sea lion and a

young elephant calf, Pearl, joined the performing pachyderms. In April of the same year, Mike Kostial was painting scenery when he fell from a ladder and broke his ankle. The Chimpanzee Show opened with Kostial in the audience as Henry Ternes presented the chimps. Ternes continued to do so until Mike's recovery.

Saturday evening, August 28, 1976 was the end of the George Vierheller big animal show era. Mike Kostial, 57, died of a heart attack while fishing. He was the last of the trainers of the large animal shows. Kostial's last show had seven chimpanzees and four ponies working in a bicentennial theme. At the Director's suggestion, Mike tried changing the show routine, using the ponies first, following with acrobatics, bicycles, etc. and ending the Show with the band number. The public had come to know the basic Chimpanzee Show script and when the chimps finished the table exchange while riding ponies many people got up and left, assuming the show was over. The script was quickly revised and the chimpanzees opened with part of the pony work, continued with the the rest of the show and the band, followed by the traditional ending, the tables. The chimps had trained the audience well.

At the end of 1976 the Zoo considered ending the Chimpanzee Show. Kostial's death, assistant trainer Henry Ternes' imminent retirement, and difficulty in obtaining new chimpanzees made the future appear doubtful. Director Schultz felt the shows were not a "big drawing card." Only 300,000 out of two million visitors paid to see the shows including the sea lions and elephants. Still the Chimpanzee Show was a major part of the Saint Louis Zoo's identity and had great public support.

The Zoo searched for a suitable act to hire for the 1977 season. In the spring of 1977 the Zoo located an act appearing at Japanese Deer Park in southern California. Greg and Carol Lille and their four young chimpanzees would replace the Kostial chimpanzee spectaculars.



The Lilles, a young couple with young chimps, presented a pleasant act but not the big Kostial show of years past. Even Mike Kostial, with the difficulty in obtaining animals and the retirement of trusted assistants, could not have continued to do shows the scale of which the public had come to know. The Lilles appeared for six seasons until 1982. In the last seasons, the Show had a fairy-tale theme that added a raven, St. Bernard dog, and a serval to the chimps. In addition to the show behaviors, in 1981 the Lilles presented something not seen since the Leon Smith days, a chimp mother with her baby. The Lilles' chimpanzees were maturing and the Zoo was planning a new Ape Building. On Labor Day 1982, at 3pm, the last show was staged at the Chimpanzee Arena. Two young chimpanzees continued to be presented, but as part of the 1983 and 1984 Sea Lion Shows. The chimps, breaking tradition, worked "naked" and presented variations of natural behaviors in a five-minute segment.

In August 1981, in an attempt to maintain summertime attendance, the Zoo brought in Steve Martin and his World of Birds Show. Martin had developed the successful bird show at San Diego's Wild Animal Park and was beginning a bird show on his own. Steve had a variety of free-flighted birds that he presented five times a day, seven days a week, until Labor Day at the Elephant Arena. It was a fine show but it was up against the other three established shows and Zoo attendance was declining as children went back to school. Martin went on to present shows around the world but not in St. Louis.

Donn Gibson, the Zoo's elephant trainer since 1970, retired in mid-season of 1990 and the elephant keeper staff continued to present the five females, Donna, Pearl, Carolyn, Clara, and Marie. In March of 1991, Carolyn and Pearl were sent to Dickerson Park Zoo in Springfield, Missouri, to be bred with their bull, Onyx. The 1991 Elephant Show was very different, featuring three elephants without headpieces and



The elephant band. Author's collection.

exhibiting less-anthropomorphic behaviors. Clara and Marie joined Donna for the show's opening minutes but soon left the stage while the keepers worked with Donna. She was put through a series of behaviors including a logging demonstration, soccer ball kicking, and spraying the audience with a trunkful of water. It was to be the last season of Elephant Shows as the Zoo prepared for the birth of Pearl's calf due in December 1992.

In 1990 a full-time assistant was added to the Sea Lion Show and the sea lions were presented seven days a week during the show season. Each Show had two or three sea lions and occasional appearances by a harbor seal, duck, or parrot. The sea lions still balanced balls on their noses and performed other show behaviors, but most everything the animals did was to demonstrate something about the animals and their adaptation to their environment. In 1996, with assistant trainer Ruth Dultz on leave with the first part of the season, the Zoo contracted a show from Wild Bird Sanctuary. The show, featuring free-flighted birds, was presented three times a day between the two sea lion shows. Once again for several reasons, a Bird Show didn't attract much public interest. The Sea Lion Show continues, presenting two sea lions in a 20 minute presentation, three times each day during the season.

#### COMMENT

The scope of this article is confined to the Saint Louis Zoo's Arena Shows. There have been other popular attractions and well-trained animals, e.g., python force-feedings and

Children's Zoo presentations, but that's for another article. The Saint Louis Zoo's collection of newspaper clippings, albums, and annual reports provided most of the facts about the Shows. I was fortunate to work with Jules Jacot, Floyd Smith, Donn Gibson, Henry Ternes, and Mike Kostial, Jr. I

saw them perform and, best of all, heard their stories.

Reading the history of the Zoo's animal shows can bring up several discussion topics. One, for example: What were the best shows?

I would suggest a list of shows in different categories and eras. For example, fellow trainers acknowledged that Floyd Smith's original elephant act of the early 50s was the best of its kind. Judging from articles and photographs, the way that Mike Kostial Sr.'s presented big cats would be popular today, but even his son considered Jules Jacot to be a better trainer. Jacot's acts of the early 50s were considered to be some of the best cat acts ever presented in America.

As for chimpanzees, one must credit Leon Smith with being the first to work with large groups of chimps, adding ponies to the show, and training many original behaviors that became signature pieces of the Chimpanzee Show for decades. However, Mike Kostial, Jr., continued to train large groups to perform these challenging behaviors and added his artistic and mechanical talent to create colorful, exciting, and unique stage shows. Although it would be difficult to select a particular year, possibly the early 60s Chimpanzee Shows featuring Mr. Moke would take honors.

While considering chimpanzees and "the best," the undisputed best assistant trainer was Henry Ternes, who began working with Leon Smith in the late 30s and stayed until Mike Kostial died in 1976. He preferred to stay in the background, but when Leon was dismissed near the end of the 1945 season, or when Mike broke his ankle in 1974, Hank filled in most ably.



# Frank A. Robbins

## a most successful failure

### PART THIRTEEN

By Robert Sabia

#### 1910--the Pennsylvania two-step.

Jiggling while you walk. Perhaps for the first time in his long ownership career, Frank A. Robbins actually had disposable coins that jingled in his pocket as he went about preparing for the 1910 circus season. Even in the halcyon days of the mid-1880's, every available cent went to improvements to the circus properties, and this continuous investment showed. He ran a first-class operation. The series of debacles that started with the failed Winter Circus in 1887/1888 caused an appropriate marshaling of funds that kept the show alive far beyond the time which could be financially justified. Although in all likelihood neither 1905 and 1906 were losers, what monies was available went into show improvements. 1908 had similar results--there was some money which was invested into needed expansion and improvements. Finally 1909 turned in what Frank A. always dreamed, enough money to enlarge the show and leave a fair amount for the Robbins' family to enjoy. With one subtle limitation, (the inability to enter into New York State), he was ready to repeat this success during 1910. This joyous circumstance of quasi affluence was dimmed somewhat with the death of his good friend and sometimes partner John W. Holmes of Brooklyn. Frank A. probably met Mr. Holmes on the Forepaugh show in the 1870's and they remained close ever since. As recently as July 1, 1909, John Holmes visited his friend while the show was in Maine. He would be missed.

As soon as the show returned to its Jersey City winterquarters, an improvement program commenced. A large force of circus and local skilled men were employed in build-

ing a ring barn, office and animal facilities. It was reported in the *Clipper* (12/11/09) that several new baggage wagons, cages and dens were in the process of being completed. The sleeping cars were being overhauled at the Lake View shops with the private car, Winona, being completely gutted and refitted with staterooms and a dining room. A relatively new Pullman car was purchased and made suitable to be the Robbins' Family car. Recapturing his position as a leader in the circus business, Frank A. recognized the great public interest in the fledgling aviation industry. He executed contracts with George DeWitt of Cleveland who was a famous aviator. Mr. DeWitt was committed to make a flight daily, weather permitting. To promote this significant feature, special lithos and other advertising material were generated. However, as this outstanding feature was never mentioned in the local newspaper reviews, it is doubted that it was ever presented.

Martin Downs was a young and important circus owner in the early

Robbins ad used n 1910. Author's collection.

**FRANK A. ROBBINS**  
NEW AND GREATEST ALL FEATURED SHOWS

**The Only Big Show Coming This Year!**

**SALISBURY Tuesday, October 4**

A Circus, Hippodrome, Menagerie and Wild West.

ONE OF THE HARDEST AND COSTLIEST ANIMAL EXHIBITIONS ON EARTH

**The Grandest and Largest Circus**

NEW ACTS — NEW FACES — NEW NAMES — NEW APPARATUS — NEW FEATS

SCORES OF FOREIGN CHAMPIONS IN EVERY LINE OF TRAINED EFFORT

AN EVENT OF SUPERNATURAL SENSATION — **"MONO"**

THE GREATEST AND ONLY "SKID DIVER" THIS WORLD

20th century. Very early in his career, he had worked on Frank A. circuses. He grew his circus rapidly and enjoyed an excellent reputation with the public and circus peers alike. Unfortunately, in October 1909 he died as a result of accident. His complete 24 car circus was purchased by Robbins' friends, the Fiss, Doerr and Carroll Horse Company, who, in turn offered the entire circus or any part thereof at an auction being held at Corry, Pennsylvania (just east of Erie) on January 28, 1910. This was a large circus by any definition and included 84 baggage horses, 34 head of ring horses, various horse acts., trick mules and horses, 6 camels, 4 elephants, a number of wild animals, 14 cages, 2 bandwagons, a calliope, 26 baggage wagons, the entire train, beaucoup canvas including the big top, 150 with 3-50s and every thing else necessary for a going circus concern. This was the auction of the year and drew most everyone who was anybody in the circus business. Acting on behalf of Fiss et al, Frank A. was charged with the responsibility for organizing the circus material for sale. He spent the better part of a month immediately prior to the actual auction preparing for this major circus event. His efforts greatly contributed to the overall success of the sale.

On the day of the sale over 200 circus luminaries were present, buzzing about, closely examining the animals and equipment on display. The auction began promptly as scheduled. John and Alf Ringling were putting together the rejuvenated Forepaugh-Sells circus and purchased much of the ring stock and a few animals. John Robinson purchased a fair amount of railroad equipment including an advertising car, several flats and stocks. The Jones Bros. were in the process of buying equip-



ment for a 20 car railer that was planned for that season which ended up to be the 14 car Buffalo Ranch Wild West Show. Many of the baggage and parade wagons went to the Joneses, as did the callopie and a number of cages. Joe Miller, of the 101 Ranch Show in conjunction with Edward and George Arlington, was a serious buyer, bidding successfully on another advertising car, flat cars, baggage horses and some miscellaneous material. Our hero, Frank A., initially tried to purchase the entire outfit in a private sale, but determined that it was too costly for him to swing at this time. The Jones Bros. made a similar attempt. Fiss et al made a business decision not to embrace a private sale of any sort, preferring an auction to maximize the net. As a bidder, Robbins bought several 60-foot flats which were incorporated into his 1910 train enlargement plans. He also purchased 2 clown mules intended to supplement this year's clowning activities. There were all smiling faces by the time the last lot was knocked down. It was a very successful day for all, including Frank A., who participated in and contributed to its success.

As the season drew closer, Frank A. made great strides in finalizing the planned program of performers and his staff. The Bergen Amusement Co. continued to be the corporate structure. Frank A. was the president and manager; Clarence Farrell, secretary and treasurer (repeater); Harry Allen, legal adjuster; John Henry Rice, general agent (repeater); Mattie Robbins, manager of privileges (repeater); Charles Chapman, manager of car #1; C. D. Daily, manager of car #2; Robbins and Rice, railroad contractors; Albert Edward and Rice, local contractors; Frank Macart and George Ross (repeater), special agents; Joseph Hughes, press agent (repeater); Charles Enright, excursion agent; H. H. Hall, side show manager (repeater); H. D. Van, manager of candy stands; Fred Markle, manager of privilege car (repeater); Frenchy Haley (later Fred King), boss canvasman; John Cunnin, supt. of lights (repeater); Sherrie Kayer, supt. of stock; Albert Chambers (later



Dave Costello Sr., the featured rider on Robbins in 1910. Pfening Archives.

Ray Adams), trainmaster (repeater); J. Stanton, superintendent of property; Eugene Blair, superintendent of elephants; and Charles Curtins, superintendent of animals.

The single ring performance at the opening date included a Grand Tournament; Edith Costello riding act with two horses; clown act with 6 joeys headed by Bill Carrell; Orton Troupe (3) high wire; the St. Leon Family tumbling and somersaulting; Madam Clarke high school horse with doves; Herbert Bros. (3) and the Levans, acrobats; The Costellos (3) horseback riding: B. Dooley, tight wire; Iva Koster, swinging perch; Harry Koster, wire act; Silver Oks, comedy wire act; B. Dooley, trapeze head stand; Dave Costello, Jr. was the equestrian director and Professor Nassell (repeater) was the musical director. Mrs. Laura Miaco was the ballet mistress (repeater).

At the end of the season the concert consisted of Ray Dee, Mabel Miaco, The Carrolls, Margaret Moris, P. W. Brown, J. V. Gleason, Charles LaBelle, William Lumbertson and Willie Green.

H. H. Hall's side show featured Bob Roy, Albino, dislocationist; Alice Brown, snake enchantress (repeater); Harry Hall, needle eating act; Percy Brown, musical act; Harry and Mrs. Hall, suspension illusion (repeater); May Stephens, sword swallowing; John Speer, Punch and Judy; James Thompson, magician; and dancing girls Lillian Gillis, Flo Ulerner and Clara Clifford. Music was provided by Prof. Johnson's colored band.

The final 3 weeks in quarters,

thousands of locals witnessed the aerial skills of aviation expert George DeWitt who was honing his skills in presenting his free act. At the same time, equally remarkable was the earth bound Frank A. who was learning to drive an automobile. He engaged an instructor and religiously followed the guidance provided. There was little danger in Robbins exceeding the speed limits and becoming airborne as he proved to be a very conservative driver. The new vehicle, a 60 horsepower Fiat, was going to be utilized in local advertising. The car was to be loaded on the train, last on /early off.

In the *Clipper* (4/23) a call ad was placed requesting that all engaged folks report to the Jersey City lot on the opening day, April 27. Ballet girls were asked to report to quarters a week earlier, apparently to define the act. He had 3 miniature cages and 1 parade wagon with 2 reindeers for sale. This wagon had been for sale since 1907. Frank A. was seeking a colored band for the side show which was soon filled by Prof. Johnson et al.

The day before the scheduled opening, the show was already located at the Greenville (Jersey City) lot. As nighttime fell a violent storm visited the show lot and did a fair amount of damage to show property. More importantly, an employee who was seeking refuge in the menagerie tent along with five other employees, was killed when a cage wagon was overturned by the wind. The menagerie tent was blown down in the process. The men sought shelter under various cage wagons from the deluge of rains flowing from the heavens. After about an hour an enormous gust of wind blew away the canvas and toppled a number of cages in the process. The steel cage bars held but the animals were in a state of panic not unlike the mind set of the individuals seeking safety underneath the cages. In addition to the man who was killed, another employee was seriously injured, being crushed by an overturned cage containing two leopards. The other employees, all of whom sustained injuries of a less serious nature, received appropriate attention and were back at their respective jobs the next morning. The furtive cries of the animals



were heard throughout the area and attracted the attention of the city police and fire departments. They assisted in capturing the many lead stock who were dashing about the neighborhood. For instance, when the tent went down, 20 shetland ponies that were tethered along the side of the menagerie tent broke away and stampeded. The police, firemen and circus employees collectively vigorously pursued the frightened herd of equines, eventually capturing the lot of them without any significant damage to life or limb.

Notwithstanding the unfortunate weather circumstances of the previous day, the show opened as scheduled at Greenville for a 2 day stand commencing April 27th. It paraded the opening day on city streets that fully represented that section of Jersey City. Great business prevailed throughout the stand. At the next stand in the Marion section of Jersey City, another parade was given to appreciative locals. The circus claimed that it carried 95 horses, 18 cages, 10 open dens, 3 bands, a caliope drawn by 10 ponies, riders dressed with bright red, green and gold uniforms and camels and elephant(s?). Although the numbers of claimed units may be in question, the parade generally impressed and pleased the locals throughout the year's tour.

Regarding sizing, the Havirland listing includes the Robbins enterprise as being on 15 cars of which consist included 1A, 3S, 7F, and 4C which seems about right. There are other local newspaper reports which indicate a 13 car show. When possessed of sufficient financial capital as he was at the outset of the 1910 season, Robbins was a representative medium size circus capable of scheduling cities of 30-50,000 people. This size city was the territory of the biggies (Ringling, Barnum & Bailey, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Forepaugh-Sells and John Robinson). The Robbins outfit could also invade the territory of the smaller railers such as Sun (9 cars), Downie & Wheeler (10 cars), Sparks (11 cars), and Sangers Combined Shows (10 cars). These listings are just a sample of shows during the 1909-1913 timeframe. The premise is this, a 15 car show with some significant acts could go

practically anywhere in the United States--from the larger cities which were primarily the domain of the "biggies" to the small town or village which was the domain of the "smallies". This entire range should have been within the capabilities of any progressive showman of the caliber of Frank A. Robbins and it was. It also meant that during these golden years of the railroad circus, strong competition for the discretionary income dollar would be coming from all quarters, big and small.

After the concluding Jersey City stand (Hoboken-4/30), the Show loaded on its train for the first time of this year with a destination of Elizabeth (5/2) some 15 miles to the south. During this period Frank A. adopted the policy that newspaper ad placements would often utilize a copy of a one sheet as the visual. By so doing, we have an excellent idea of the unique litho artwork then being employed and some of the featured acts. In the case of Elizabeth, an act entitled "Mono--the Greatest and only SKID DIVER" was depicted in the newspaper. Our program listing does not contain this Mono but it doesn't mean with certainty that the act was not on the show. While at Elizabeth the high strung English stallions became a cause for alarm. Two of the animals were so aggressive that they were always muzzled. The muzzles were removed only during eating. In the morning one of the normally muzzled horses was being fed by a groom. The horse bit the groom in the face nearly gouging his victim's eye out. Later in the afternoon, again during feeding time, the two normally muzzled horses attacked each other. This fight wrecked the interior of the stable tent. One of the horses was so badly bitten that it may have had to be shot. Meanwhile things were much calmer at the ticket wagon where the only alarm was the crush of patrons seeking tickets. There were two record breaking houses for Elizabeth. The locals considered the parade and



the performance to be much better than the previous year, setting an enviable precedent for other circuses to match.

Perth Amboy was another short hop to the south. There a good afternoon house was followed by another in the evening. Half an hour into the evening performance, it started raining, increasing in volume until it became a downpour. The canvas was suppose to be waterproof but it permitted the rain to soak the patrons with rivers of water. To avoid the deluge the crowd surged from the seating and entered the center part of the big top, milling about with the performers who were attempting to carry on with their acts. However, with the miniature waterfalls occurring all about, both the patrons and performers spent most of their time dodging the rivers from the sky. Finally the rains ceased and after considerable encouragement from circus employees, the audience returned to their seats. There they witnessed six black stallions go berserk during their performance, and start running about the arena. It appeared for a few moments that a disaster was in the making. Fortunately, circus hands were able to contain the horses before serious injuries to the public were sustained. The final stop of the brief north Jersey tour was New Brunswick (5/4). Over 3,000 locals were in attendance at the evening performance. The New Brunswick Times stated in its review that "... Robbins this year has a show that is one hundred per cent better than the outfit he piloted last year. There is but one ring but he has engaged a number of acts of high order and has six funny clowns that keep things lively between the acts. The band concert with the band in the ring, before the show started was an enjoyable feature. The trained stallions, the trick mules, the pretty riding acts, the wire walkers and trapeze acts were particularly striking. Eight girls in striking costumes gave a couple of drills. ... The troupe of stallions seemed a little unruly. At Perth Amboy, the night before four of



them left the ring and started for the reserved seat section, causing somewhat of a panic. This was a feature which was recently secured from the Barnum Show . . . . New Brunswick will always welcome Robbins as long as he brings a show up to last night's standard."

At this point Robbins would normally head north into New York State or rapidly through New York State into New England. With the sword of show property seizure hanging over his head, he dared not proceed in this direction. Instead, he continued south in New Jersey for a couple of dates before heading into Pennsylvania for an extended stay, very similar to the routing of the ill-fated 1891 tour. But at least for this single year, the results would be different. Burlington (5/5), midway between Trenton and Philadelphia, proved to be an excellent start with packed houses greatly enjoying the performances. Again the stallions, clowning, trapeze, bareback riding and slack wire acts were particularly noteworthy. The large number of performing females was appreciated and their flashy costuming dazzling. At Salem (5/7) on the Delaware River, the locals considered the performance to be the best they have witnessed in recent years. New Jersey closed out with a super date at the large city of Camden (5/9) where packed houses caused a sparkle in Frank A.'s eyes--the sun reflecting off the gold coin of the Realm.

The extensive Pennsylvania route started off a bit late in Norristown (5/10) with a tardy arrival causing a delay in the parade of 3 hours. Nevertheless, large attendance was had at both performances. The strength of the menagerie was observed including 2 elephants, one of which was named Queen. The circus continued in a generally westerly direction into the Pennsylvania Dutch country. Relatively small towns such as Birdsboro (5/13) and Womelsdorf (5/14) were visited. These farming communities included a large percentage of Amish and Mennonites in their makeup. The "Plain Folks" were good circus patrons and had plenty of discretionary money available. A Sunday



The former Forepaugh-Sells Eagle tableau on Robbins in 1910. Pfening Archives.

arrival took the aggregation to the large town of Lebanon. All day thousands milled about the lot. They returned in droves the next day (5/16) for the parade and performance. This great attendance was garnered in spite of the fact that the formidable 47 car Forepaugh-Sells Circus would be showing there in 9 days. For the record, Forepaugh drew over 11,000 customers in very heavy rains that day (5/25). Tower City (5/18) experienced a late arrival because of a broken wheel on a rail car. Notwithstanding, the parade got off at 10:00 a.m. as scheduled and the rest of the day proceeded as normal. Great cooperation from all hands including performers made this timely presentation possible. The week was completed on the up side with a fine date at Schuylkill Haven (5/21). The good news at the ticket office was tempered with the report of a heavily loaded wagon on the way to the runs could not manage a hill. When backing down the hill, the wagon upset severely injuring the driver and wrecking the wagon. Load shifts were necessary in order to depart for the next stand on a timely basis.

The show was now deep into the coal country never far from aggressive competition. Also cavorting about the State during this May/June time frame was the aforementioned Forepaugh-Sells, Barnum & Bailey, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Buffalo Bill, 101 Ranch, Howes Great London, Jones Bros. Buffalo Ranch Wild West, Sun Bros., and the Mighty Haag Shows. And these were just the railers! There were always more than a couple of overland circuses in the area. Being the "first in" was a

noble goal that was not often achieved or even achievable with such intense competition.

The Monday date at Tamaqua (5/23) provided sufficient time to repair the damaged wagon. There the tent was packed for the evening performance which gave great satisfaction. It was said that the show grossed \$1,700 in that town. Routing continued in the small coal towns of Ashland (5/24), Girardville, (5/26), Mt. Carmel (5/27) and Shamokin (5/28). Although these towns were but a few miles of one another, the rugged terrain created an aura of isolation that permitted scheduling all of them in a short period of time. Ashland became the hoodoo town of the year. This undesirable appellation came about by first a laborer being seized with inflamed appendix which required an emergency operation in a nearby town. Next another laborer had his foot crushed by a horse trampling upon it. Then another horse dropped dead. During the well-filled afternoon performance, Bernard Dooley of the Six Ortons was seriously injured when the pole upon which he was balancing snapped causing him to fall on the broken end. This would-be lance penetrated his jaw resulting in a nasty wound. Lastly, around 5 o'clock in the afternoon, a sudden and torrential rain washed out any chance for the evening show. There was over 18 inches of water on the lot with much paraphernalia floating about the area. Of course the day would not have been complete without a couple of mishaps during the loading process. Contrast this day with the day some five rotations of the earth later. Decoration Day (5/30) turned in the greatest gross achieved by the show since 1889 and the third largest in its history. Hazelton celebrated this holiday by going to the circus in such numbers that 3 performances were necessary, each to a packed and pleased audience. More than that, over 5,000 sideshow admissions were also sold.

June commenced with a good stand at Berwick. A baggage wagon broke down crossing the trolley car tracks on the way to the runs snapping the tongue and doing serious



damage to the body. The next day at Bloomsburg, tragedy was narrowly averted when a small girl, awaiting the arrival of the parade, darted across the street in front of an oncoming buggy. She was knocked down by the horse which manifesting amazing dexterity, stepped over the girl. Unfortunately, one of the buggy's wheels passed over the child causing superficial damage to her arm and body. Robbins continued working westward through the center of the State. At Mifflinburg (6/7) almost 6,000 paid admissions was had during the day. In the afternoon only standing room was available for late arrivals but that did not prevent all from enjoying a fine performance. Mount Union (6/8) turned in similar numbers. The parade was very well received and noted to be over a half mile in length. The next day at Phillipsburg provided heavy rain, good business, and appreciative audiences. All things being said, not a bad combination at all.

While enroute to Ebensburg (6/15), the Robbins train experienced a wreck which almost resulted in a derailment. When passing over a bridge, a baggage wagon broke loose running over the side of the car. In turn, three cages were twisted and a hyena, a jaguar and lions escaped. A half dozen employees were injured, one mortally. Frank A. arranged for portable cages to be readied and hunting parties to be organized. Within hours, except for the hyena, all of the animals were recaptured. The hyena made the mistake of making an unannounced visit to a house of a local farmer who did not even know what it was and couldn't care less. It was ugly and mean looking and that was enough. Scratch one hyena. Being an honest chap, when he realized the source of the animal, the farmer sent the hyena's hide to Mr. Robbins. The cages were sent to Altoona for repairs. The dates at Ebensburg and Gallitzin (6/16) were played as scheduled. By the time the circus left Gallitzin for its next stand at South Fork, the cages had been returned and repairs were effected on the slightly damaged passenger cars.

Vandergrift (6/21), in the Greater Pittsburgh area, found the Robbins circus was just fine and deserved the

good attendance it garnered. The towners also found out the Robbins outfit had grift of its own that wasn't part of its name. The slicky boys were active this day and the local paper put it so well. "These gambling artists are part of the 'educational' features of almost every circus and every time one comes to town a large class of students pay high prices for their first lesson in high finance." Nuff said. While at Vandergrift, Sun Bros. was at Apollo, merely a mile distant. Much visiting took place with George Sun and wife attending the afternoon performance at the Robbins show and Mr. and Mrs. Robbins taking in the Sun performance in the evening. Milton and Winona Robbins spent almost the entire day with their three Sun coun-



terparts, probably exchanging route cards. A similar circumstance was created at Jeanette (6/28) where Frank A. day and dated Big Otto Carnival Company. Both companies had a very good day. The carnival did not show in the afternoon so Big Otto Breitenkreuz and his wife attended the circus performance. The visit was returned in the evening by Frank A. and Mattie. When on the Big Otto lot, Frank A. saw a performing lion which he wanted and purchased same. The lion departed that night as part of the Robbins outfit.

With the summer reaching its peak and hot days prevailing, Frank A. continued to circle Pittsburgh, initially playing towns and villages south of the city, e.g. Monongahala (7/1) and Donora (7/2) and then wandering north with stands at Mars (7/7) and Elwood City (7/8). All of the jumps were very short, some covering only five or so miles. At Mars, equestrian director Dave Castello, Sr. celebrated his 50th birthday given by his many friends on the show. He was showered with presents including a gold-headed umbrel-

la (pun intended). The next day at Elwood City, Frank A. hosted fellow circus owners Walter L. Main and Dan Robinson. He was also a host to a very good afternoon house and a packed night presentation. The routing headed north and finally exited the greater Pittsburgh area at Butler (7/11) where the parade and performances were greatly applauded. Surprisingly, excellent clowning was again mentioned so the half dozen joeys must have been doing their stuff in fine fashion. Again, "Mono the Skid Diver" was highlighted in the newspaper advertising but was not mentioned in the reviews. On the other hand Prof. Gherhart's 8 perfect stallions, the Dave Costello Family, bareback riders and the Miles Orton troupe of acrobats were mentioned. The question whether Mono was actually on the show or merely featured in the advertising remained unanswered.

John Robinson's Circus preceded Frank A. (7/14) in Greenville by almost a month but the dates were sufficiently time spanned that business was not negatively affected. The next day at Meadville pleased all by presenting an excellent parade and an equally fine performance. The review did mention a free act which was also greatly appreciated without further describing what this act actually was. It may have been the elusive "Mono." There was nothing elusive about the crowds at the large city of Erie (7/21). They just didn't show up. Sometimes when one follows Barnum & Bailey by a couple of weeks, which in turn followed Buffalo Bill by a few weeks, which in turn followed Hagenbeck-Wallace by a month, one can expect that the town has been over saturated. It seems that Erie was just that. However all was not lost because during the Erie stand, performers Lou Herbert and Lilly Jeanette were wed in the center ring after a season's long romantic interlude. Departing the show's rostrum at Erie was Col. and Zelda DeCoupe who decided to form a circus of their own and participate in the easy profits gained thereby. I'm sure that Frank A. could provide a few worthy comments in that regard.

Nearby Union City (7/22) turned out in force to the complete satisfac-



tion of the viewers. Corry (7/23), the site of the recent Cole Bros. auction, was just fair. There the locals were joined by folks from the countryside who augmented their Saturday shopping day with a visit to Frank A.'s canvas city. Northwest Pennsylvania continued to factor big on Frank A.'s agenda. But the show was gradually working its way eastward now with stands at Franklin (7/25) which was also fair, Oil City (7/26), and Sheffield (7/27). The good month finished on a very positive note at Ridgeway (7/31). Two big houses were so pleased that the performances began almost to the second as scheduled and there was always something to rivet the attention of the audience throughout the entire program. The general opinion was that this was a circus which was out of the ordinary and the circus management was to be congratulated on the caliber of people carried on the circus.

St. Marys, in north-central Pennsylvania, kick started August in fine style. With 2 big houses and pleased patrons, it could not be better. Leaving Port Allegheny ((8/3) for the next stand at Coudersport, another rail mishap caused 3 cages to tip over releasing their contents. This time a jaguar, a wild boar and some kangaroos escaped. It might have been the same jaguar that was released in a similar event a month earlier. The jaguar, probably recalling his good friend, the hyena, who was shot by a local farmer, opted to submit to an easy capture after some appropriate growling to maintain his image. Anything to stay away from some gun-happy farmer. The other escapees were also recaptured with relative ease. Reaching Westfield (8/6), which is only 5 miles from the New York State border near the east/west centerline, business measured up to the now expected standard. The local paper liked everything that it saw. It noted that the last time the show played Westfield (1906) it had 2 rings. With the present one ring arrangement, there may not have been so many acts, but the character of the acts were of a higher skill level and resulted in an outstanding program. It also noted there



An opening of the Robbins side show. Pfening Archives.

wasn't any gambling and all patrons were treated with respect. This reaction to the show was repeated at Wellsboro on Monday (8/8). However, regarding the menagerie, the Wellsboro paper wondered if most of the animals had escaped at Port Allegheny and never were recaptured. I guess you can't please everyone.

A surprising ad was placed in the August 13th New York *Clipper*. It stated Frank A. wanted performers. No specific kind was mentioned. He also was in need of a cook house manager and a cook. There hadn't been any mention of performer departures nor was there any subsequent mention in the trade journals that any new performers were in fact added. This also applies to the cook house personnel. Maybe there was a bit of internal squabbling that was amicably settled without anyone actually leaving.

Weather was changing for the worse with heavy summertime storms but it did not seem to significantly affect the good business being experienced. Both Jersey Shore (8/9) and Lock Haven (8/10) had heavy rains but still did OK. The Lock Haven press stated that perhaps in good weather the tent would have been packed instead of being near filled at both performances. Tyrone (8/12) also provided happy talk in the ticket wagon. The circus was now rapidly heading southwest. During this period Leslie Fort, the son of the Governor of New Jersey, traveled with his longtime friends, Frank A. and Mattie Robbins. He among many others celebrated Mattie Robbins' birthday while playing Hyndman (8/16). She was given

many gifts including a fair number of gold and crystal pieces. At Meyersdale (8/17), Robbins was only 10 miles north of Maryland and 40 miles east of the northeast corner of West Virginia. In this locale, big crowds attended both showings. The side show doesn't often receive any comments from the local press, but this reporter thought that the side show

was the best ever to be seen locally. Every freak and clever trick was unusually novel. No "sucker-skinning" was observed or heard about. The six beautiful performing stallions excited the admiration of everyone. The following day at Somerset included heavy rains at night. However, there was a capacity crowd in the afternoon and not much less during the onslaught of heavy dew.

They loved the music in Somerset. Connellsville (8/22) chipped in with fine business. Once again the clowning drew heavy applause. This amazing 100 plus day tour of Pennsylvania ended the next day at Fairchance which hovers but 20 miles north of West Virginia, its next State of exploration. Robbins must have felt pretty satisfied with his decision not to pay the alimony and stay out of New York and New England. Here it was, almost September, and he was more than solvent, managing an outstanding circus by all accounts. Who needed his old stomping grounds after all? Hmmm--we shall see about that.

The sojourn into West Virginia was very brief, only two stands; Cameron (8/24) and Moundsville (8/24) on the Ohio River. Then it was into Ohio for 8 dates commencing at St. Clairsville. Within two dates Frank A. was playing Mt. Vernon (8/29), midway between Columbus and Mansfield. Then it continued north picking up Butler at its apogee, reversing its direction, heading south to Shawnee, Somerset (9/1), McConnellsville and finally exiting at Beverly (9/3). The routing was dramatic and puzzling. As the title was almost an unknown in the Buckeye State, Robbins may have been testing the waters for a more extensive tour in the future. It is not known if the dates proved profitable but that



may not have been the reason why he was there. Nevertheless it continued to receive plaudits on its quality and character. For example, Somerset considered it to be the finest one ring circus ever to present its wares there and hoped that the town would be pleased with a return visit in the near future.

The routing then took a turn south to explore the internals of West Virginia. Starting at Spencer (9/5), Frank A. went as far west as Ravenswood (9/6) on the south bank of the Ohio River, as far south as Richwood (9/12), deep in the Allegheny Mountains, back north to Buckhannon (9/15), before charging out the state for a single Maryland date at Oakland (9/15). It was then back into West Virginia for 2 more dates before finally exiting for the year at Romney (9/18). Almost all of the stands in West Virginia were very small villages which were dependent upon folks descending from the surrounding hills and dales to make any semblance of a decent crowd. Sometimes it was successful and sometimes not. Inclement weather was very much a deterrent as the local road network did not support distant travel in the mud and rain. In the larger town of Oakland, which was but a couple of miles inside of Maryland, the towners turned out in the afternoon despite a late arrival that prevented the parade being made. Those many attendees were glad to be included in that score as there was universal acclamation regarding the performance. Hancock, Maryland (9/20) has the distinction of being the largest town in the United States being located in one state and being within a mile of another state to the north, Pennsylvania, and yet a mile of another state to the south, West Virginia. As a result, if a person was not satisfied with one set of governing laws and ordinances, he/she could merely move a single mile and be governed by a totally different set of rules. So that premise was tested by Frank A. Robbins Shows on its visit to that locale. The Hancock Bridge Company that spanned the Potomac River decided to levy an "outrageous" toll on the circus to pass into Hancock proper. After failing to bring the charge down to something

more reasonable, Frank A. decided to play on the southern banks of the Potomac in West Virginia. So the people of Hancock had to pay a nominal amount for passage both ways across the bridge to visit the show grounds. Clearly the bridge would have garnered more out of charging the circus a reasonable fee than collecting a lesser amount from the local citizens and the local economy would have benefited by keeping some of the circus money in the community. The local newspaper wasn't very enthusiastic about the myopic view taken by the bridge authorities and said so. While unloading at Hancock, an elephant man was severely injured when the train backed over his foot cutting off his toes and crushing the foot itself. Another employee was slightly injured in the same accident.

Maryland and Delaware were the routing focus for the remainder of the season. There was a most successful showing at Annapolis (9/23).



The *Evening Capital and Maryland Gazette* reported that the "... Robbins' circus is different, very different, from a large class of circuses that visit Annapolis, and is far above the average. Every act in the many acts (and often three and four going on at the same time) is excellent. There is nothing cheap in the character of the show, unless it is the price (25 cents). That you can't judge a book by its cover was emphasized yesterday afternoon by the 'parade' given before the afternoon performance in the big tent. The 'parade' does not measure up to the standard, and is a poor advertising card for the Robbins' circus which in itself is altogether above the average circus that visits small towns. One of the special features of the Frank A. Robbins big show is the neatness and dispatch with which everything is done. Their performance begins on time and everything goes with a dash and

a swing from start to finish. There is always something doing at the Robbins circus.

"Before the performance a peep behind the scenes in the pad room' and dressing rooms, reveals the secrets of make-up, lightning changes of costume, and the fact that fifteen or twenty girls can live under a tent in a space 6 x 12, each having all her belongings in a trunk, and everything in its place. The men have one-half of the dressing tent, the women the other half, and everything is done with order and system. 'How do they accomplish so much in such a small space, and living in a trunk?' asked a *Capital* staff representative of Mme. Miaco, the mistress of wardrobe and the real mother and matron to the girls of the Robbins circus. 'Oh,' was the replay, 'there is a method in their madness, as it were, and with all there is. 'Method,' that is the secret.'

"Mme. Laura Miaco has spent most of her life under circus tents. For years she was with the Ringling Bros. with whom her husband now is. She teaches the ballet and looks out for the girls and their welfare. She is pleasant, good nature and affable and the circus girls are fond of her.

"A whole show in themselves are the Orton family. They do about everything in the circus line from trapeze and tight wire performance to playing clown and juggling. When asked if she felt no fear while on the flying perch or carrying her sister across the tight wire and in doing hazardous trapeze work, Miss Orton said she was not afraid. 'Fear' is not in her vocabulary, and she doesn't believe she has a nerve in her stockily built little body. The Orton family do some very clever work in midair on the wire and in trapeze and balancing, and but few other actors ever attempt Miss Orton's act on the 'flying perch', which is bold, daring, and dangerous.

"The Castello family is also a wonder. Every member is versatile and they are especially adept at riding. Each (two women and a man) owns his or her own horse, beautiful animals. The Castellinos do some daring acts in bareback riding, and one act, the horizontal bar, on which Mme. Castello, Mile. Castello and M. Castello perform while riding bare-



back on one horse, is exclusively their own act.

"Ray Dee, the contortionist, can two is himself into any shape, and can tie his long, lean, lanky body into a double bow knot. He gets himself through a grace hoop while blindfolded and holding a glass of water on his head, not spilling the liquid. He also does some clever slack wire performance. The Herbert Brothers are fine acrobats, and give an exhibition of some unusual features in gymnastics. The Marley Brothers, as foot jugglers, are excellent and Mlle. Jeannett does the rolling globe feature to the admiration of all.

"An especially attractive feature of the Robbins circus is the dancing horse 'Duke' and his trainer, LaBelle Clarke. The horse is a magnificent piece of horse flesh, and has been trained in a masterly fashion. Duke dances gracefully, bows elegantly and does a waltz and two-step irresistibly. This act alone is a whole show in itself.

"The Aerial Leons in trapeze work and Roman rings and the 'cloud swing' are wonders, and Professor Gearhardt with his eight performing stallions shows what time and patience can do in animal training, and the 'horse sense' is almost human."

Not too shabby of a review. An excellent insight into what a one ring circus of note was all about. Oh yes, business was great.

Heading north in order to get into the Delmarva Peninsula, a defective rail car caused a late arrival at Elkton (9/24). As a result the afternoon performance had to be called off. The evening performance at Chestertown (9/26) was also canceled, this time because of a huge fire in town. The circus personnel greatly assisted the local volunteers in bringing the fire under control. Centreville (9/27) and Millington, DE (9/28) followed with excellent business and uneventful visits. At Elkton, Chestertown and Centreville, the Mighty Haag Circus beat Robbins in by a few days. However, it appeared to be universally recognized that the Robbins enterprise was the significantly better program and the locals choose to wait for it. Cambridge (10/1) was always a Robbins town and this year was no

exception. Salisbury (10/4) turned out for both Haag (9/29) and Robbins. While Robbins continued to garner high marks in terms of the performance, Haag received ho-hum after notices. Meanwhile the billing war between Haag and Robbins continued with earnest. At Georgetown, Delaware (10/10) the Haag and Robbins advances did due battle with the hods. The Haag men built a four



Two elephants on Robbins in 1910. Fred Hoffman collection.

high ninety-six foot long board fence near the railroad station, while the Robbins ensemble caught the center of the town with two 28 sheet stands. Business was considered an expensive draw. The season drew to a close at Delaware's capital, Dover (10/12). The Maryland and Delaware tour was considered to be very successful.

From all appearances, the 1910 season was an artistic and financial success. The profits may not have been as large as 1909 because of both a higher nut and the lack of a remarkable run similar to the first third of the 1909 season in New Jersey, New York and New England. On the other hand, the 1909 season did play much larger cities on the whole with their inherently greater costs. It will be recalled that much of the 1910 tour scheduled very small towns and large villages in rural Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia. Although there were a few accidents and missed performances, there wasn't any event that seriously affected business for more than a day. The weather was generally good.

As an excellent indicator of how well any show does, the staff and performers were much the same at the conclusion as they were at the onset. In addition, grifting seemed to be much less. A sign of the times perhaps.

However, this would not be the Robbins operation if an entire season could pass without at least a single negative incident taking place and this year did not disappoint. After tucking the circus away for the winter at its Jersey City quarters, two such notable events occurred. On November 9th, daughter Winona, now 18, disappeared from the family Jersey City home, only to show up 7 hours later, a married woman. Apparently, this was a stunner to her mother and father. She married a candy butcher from the show, a gentleman named Ray Anders, aged 23, who was residing locally. We have frequently mentioned that Winona was a precocious young lady and very helpful around the circus--maybe in more ways than one. In any event, this was to be a relatively short-term marriage and Winona would continue to grow in circus skills both in the arena and as a most important member of the advance.

The other matter was the death of the very large elephant, Queen. It was intentionally poisoned in the winterquarters with a huge dose being intermixed with its food. This elephant trampled its keeper, Robert Shields, a few days earlier. Frank A. had recently purchased Queen in April 1910 which in turn got it from the auction of the Cole Shoe in January. It was said that Queen had previously been on Sells and Grey and other shows and its history on the circus dated back to at least 1886.

In summary, 1910 was a good year with a couple of late set backs. Frank A. proved he did not need the New York and New England dates to survive. At least not yet. He also knew he could not play an extensive tour of Pennsylvania again so soon in 1911. But he was looking west of that State for the answer. Whether the answer given was one that he wanted to hear would soon be known. But for now, the Pennsylvania two-step tempo suited him just fine; he easily kept in step with the music.



# 1930s Post Cards of Hagenbeck-Wallace Winter Quarters

These post cards of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus winter quarters in Peru, Indiana were sold at Peru stores in the early 1930s.

All were in black and white except for the view of the elephants which was in full color. The cards are from the Pfening Archives.





# Side Lights On The Circus Business

## PART TWENTY-THREE

By David W. Watt

*Editor's note. The dates listed are the days the article appeared in the Janesville, Wisconsin Gazette.*

**June 12, 1915**

Last week the Ringling show appeared in Hartford, Conn., in what has been known for many years as the City Park. This is located in the center of the beautiful city of Hartford. The Ringling Show bears the distinction of being the only show that has exhibited in the City Park for just forty years. The last circus that exhibited there before the Ringlings was the Dan Rice show in 1875. After that time the show grounds were out on what was known as Colt's pasture. This property belonged to the famous manufacturer of Colts revolvers, who made many millions out of the business. While this was a larger tract of land, it was fenced off in ten acre fields, the fencing all being of oak rails of the old fashioned kind and was located on the opposite side of the road from the game preserve, owned by the same estate. While Mr. Colt, the inventor, died before my time in the business, his widow could always be seen at the show in the afternoon.

Hartford we considered one of the "warmer" towns of the year, and often in the evening would turn away thousands of people. But Hartford people always seemed to be friendly to circuses and as the Park in the center of the city seemed to be the only available lot, this was turned over to the Ringlings, rather than not have the show. I know of few cities in the

country that would make in order to have the circus.

In 1882, the Adam Forepaugh show was billed to show in Toledo, Ohio, on Monday. We arrived there early Sunday morning, and seven or eight of the heads of the show stopped at the Boody Hotel, which at that time was the best house in the city. Among the number was the late B. F. Keith, the millionaire theatrical manager who died last year. The landlord of the Hotel Boody had a good time Sunday evening, visited with the show people and invited six of us to be his guests on Monday to a 12 o'clock luncheon. And although we impressed on him the necessity of us all being at the show grounds before one o'clock, it was fifteen minutes after one when we put in an appearance at the grounds, where hundreds of people were crowded around the ticket wagon, and Adam Forepaugh and the door tenders taking money at the main entrance, and no one to sell tickets.

I rushed into the wagon, threw open the door and commenced selling tickets without even stopping to get

Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows on a lot in 1915. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.



out any change. When Mr. Forepaugh saw the door up, he made a rush for the wagon with his old hickory cane high in the air, yelling at the top of his voice, "I know who will be in that ticket wagon next year! I know who'll be in that ticket wagon next year!"

I never looked up, but kept on sawing wood, which did not seem to please him. He waited there until the crowd got away and then came up to the wagon and said to me, "Did you hear what I said? I know very well who'll be in this ticket wagon next year."

After he had repeated this three or four times, I spoke up and said, "Yes, Governor, I know who'll be here next year, too. I am coming back myself. For you need me and I need you."

He looked at me in angry way and said, "Dave, I want to tell you something. You are not the man that I had in my mind." And it was two or three days before the "Governor" and I were on any more than speaking terms. But it is safe to say that after that, instead of being fifteen minutes late, I was always a half hour or more early.

John A. Forepaugh, a nephew of Adam, was the manager of the show, and by the way, one of the nicest gentlemen that I ever knew in or out of

the business. John got a big salary and also an interest in the privileges, and his yearly income would figure around \$30,000 each year. He and his wife traveled in a private car, but John A. seldom saw much of the town that we showed in, for if the show was in town on time, he would be on the



lot by five o'clock in the morning and would never leave until the last wagon left at night.

John was a great smoker and always smoked the best cigars. And three or four times a week he would hand me three or four dollars in the evening and tell me to bring him some good cigars the next morning. I would go to the cigar store or drug stores and get as good rates as I could and would always hold out a quarter or third of them, according to the rate that I got. Adam Forepaugh and one or two others knew about this, but it was all kept quiet from John, and there were three or four others that always had two or three cigars apiece that John paid for.

But one afternoon he ordered his horse and buggy, and he and his wife took a drive to town, and as he was particularly fond of the brand of cigars that I brought him that day, he commenced looking for the drug store where I purchased them. He finally found it, but when the druggist told him what he had charged me, John knew there was something wrong. When he came back to the lot, he did not say a word, but came into the ticket wagon back of me, pulled half a dozen cigars out of my vest pocket, broke them all up, threw them out of the wagon, gave me a good choking and reached around my safe and took twenty-five dollars of my money, and then went up to the main entrance to his uncle and told him what I had been doing.

"But," he said, "Uncle Ad, I got even with him. I took \$25 out of his safe and I am going to keep it."

The old man laughingly said, "Johnny, if you want to be sure and be even, you had better go back and get fifty more." And it was then and there that I lost my position as purchasing agent in the cigar business with the manager of the show.

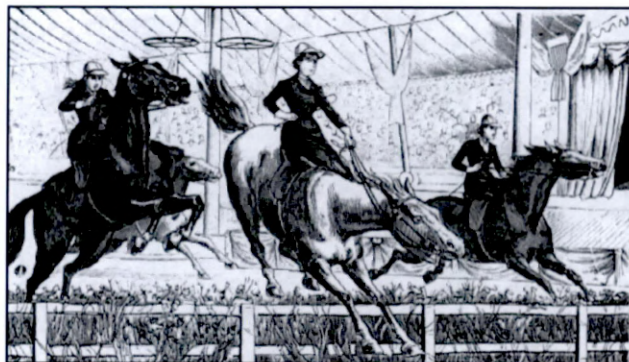
But John had made up his mind then and there that he would get even. Not so long after that we had a long Sunday run where everyone had to purchase or provide his or her meals for the day. John Forepaugh told his wife to invite me into their car for my meals on Sunday. He said they had plenty in the car and that I might just as well be their guest on the long run Sunday and Sunday night. So Mrs. Lou Forepaugh told

me to have the porter call me and to come to their car in time for breakfast and spend Sunday with them. John was afraid to invite me himself for fear that I might be suspicious, so sent his wife and she played the part well.

I had the porter call me Sunday morning at seven o'clock, went forward and got on the platform of their car. This was at the end of the division in the road where they changed engines, and the next division was about ninety miles. It was in the fall and the weather was very dry, dusty and cold, and while every few minutes I would pound on the door, I did not get an answer. It was nearly 12 o'clock before we reached the next division, and the train stopped, and I was in the cold and dirt all the morning without anything to eat. I quietly took my medicine and said nothing, and when the train stopped, went back to my own car and begged a little breakfast and recollected that they never saw or heard me. But this was done to get even with me on the cigar deal.

John A. Forepaugh and William A. Pinkerton, the famous detective of Chicago, were warm friends. That coming winter Mr. Pinkerton invited his friend to come to Chicago and be his guest for a week. After he had been in Chicago two or three days, he said to Mr. Pinkerton, "I must go up to Janesville and spend one day with Dave, for if he would ever find out that I had been in Chicago for a week and did not come and spend at least one day with him, he would never forgive me."

So the next day he and a detective by the name of Saxey, who had been with the show for two or three years, came to Janesville and spent a day with me. At that time the train left Janesville at 11:30 o'clock in the evening for Chicago, so about 11 o'clock they bade me good-bye at the hotel and left for the train. But a few minutes before leaving, Mr. Forepaugh handed the cigar man two dollars and said, "Roll me up two dollars worth of those cigars we have



been smoking so that Mr. Saxey and I can smoke on the way to Chicago."

John wore a big, heavy Ulster and dropped the cigars in the outside pocket, and I watched my chance and took them unbeknownst to him. After the train had been out of Janesville some time, Mr. Forepaugh said, "Saxey, we had better go forward into the smoker and light a couple of those cigars that I bought off Dave's friend."

After getting into the smoker, Mr. Forepaugh reached around after his cigars, and when he could not find them, he well knew where they were. The next day I got a letter from the Pinkerton office, saying they would give me twenty-four hours to return the cigars or the money they cost, or they would send one of their men up here after me. In the same letter Mr. Forepaugh enclosed a note to me saying that my services with the Forepaugh show would not be needed any longer, that I could go back with the Burr Robbins show where my kind of people belonged. I answered Mr. Pinkerton's letter, telling him that my business was such that I could not possibly come to Chicago, but would be going on to the show in Philadelphia in the spring and would stop and see him. "And you may also tell your friend, John A., to tell his uncle, Adam Forepaugh, when he goes home, that I will be there in due time to start out with the show in the spring."

John A. was a good fellow and it made but little difference to him how serious a joke might be for a time. He made the best of it, but was always looking for a chance to get even. He was alderman of the eighth ward in Philadelphia and was one of the men who were appointed by the mayor to bring the old Liberty Bell to the World's Fair in Chicago. And it was



not long after that until John A. Forepaugh died with pneumonia, and this ended the career of one high-class gentleman in the circus business.

#### June 19, 1915

Possibly but few people are aware that the oldest showman in the world lives in Rock county, and has made his permanent home here for more than fifty-five years. This man is Colonel George Washington Hall. His home is in Evansville. By appointment, I made the colonel a visit last Monday and when I arrived at the station the colonel was there with his horse and carriage to meet me. You only have to take a look at him to know he is well over the hill of life, for his snow white hair which rested gently on his shoulders told the story plainer than words of the many years he has put behind him in the circus business. The horse he was driving, he told me, was known as "Old Calico," and that she was 22 years old and came from the famous ranch of Buffalo Bill at North Platte, Nebraska. The colonel said he and "Old Calico" have been partners for years and that he could leave her for hours on the street without tying. He said that while she would be of little value to anyone else, money could not buy her from him.

We were soon on our road to his home, which is located just outside the city limits, south of the city. The house is of the bungalow style, contains five rooms and is modern in every way. There is something like two acres of land with large shade trees, and is certainly one of the beauty spots of the town. There Colonel Hall, or "Popcorn George," as he is familiarly known, and his esteemable wife, "Mother Loue," as she had been known in the circus business for many years, live alone with the exception of a few pets, such as a fox terrier dog, one of the largest great danes that I ever saw, and a parrot that insisted on talking most of the time. Mrs. Hall showed me their curio room, which they have gathered in the last fifty years from all parts of the world.

Colonel Hall not only bears the distinction of being the oldest living showman, but he has put in more years in the business than any man



George "Popcorn" Hall, famous Wisconsin showman.

that ever lived, for there was twenty-five years of his life that his show never closed. Colonel Hall owns several pieces of property in Evansville and five or six farms near by, so that he is provided well for a rainy day. It is there in the modest bungalow where they spent so many years of the best of their lives that he and mother Loue expect to stay until the Announcer calls all over.

Many a showman in hard luck has been helped on his way to prosperity by "Popcorn George" and he bears the reputation in his own town of never allowing a worthy poor person to rap at his door for help the second time. Col. George Hall has the reputation of accomplishing many difficult undertakings, among them chartering a sailing vessel, taking an entire show, elephants and camels, and exhibiting them in the islands of the West Indies, something that no other showman ever attempted.

Colonel Hall was born in Lowell, Mass., on the fifth day of December 1837. When he was seven years old he went with his parents to Manchester, New Hampshire. He did not take to books or school, and left home at the age of ten years and went to Lawrence, where he found employment as an errand boy with a man by the name of Adset, at one dollar per week. He saw a man selling popcorn and this seemed to appeal to him.

About this time the city of Boston was celebrating its one hundredth anniversary. Horace Greeley was the speaker of the day. George was there, and his original way of selling popcorn attracted Greeley's attention so much that upon reaching New York, Mr. Greeley gave him a write-up. Going into a business place if they did not seem inclined to buy, George would pour out some popcorn on the counter saying, "I guess it is my treat," and walk out. The next time he came sales would be good.

Colonel Hall came to Wisconsin in 1860 and ran a side show with the Dick Sands circus one season. Then one season with Jerry Mabie, one season with Van Amburgh's show. He continued in this business until 1886. He then organized a show of his own and took the show to the south, where he remained about twenty-five years. On the first day of January in 1887, he chartered a schooner, the "Emma Fox," carried his show to the West Indies and South America, showing at all the Windward islands, the Bahamas, Trinidad and then to the mainland and showed in many cities and towns in the Amazon region. In 1886, he also traveled through Mexico, showing at many places, including the City of Mexico, and coming out at El Paso. He was showing at Vera Cruz in 1898 when the Spanish war broke out.

Colonel Hall has seen many ups and downs, but has always been equal to all the emergencies. He was considered one of the leading side show orators of his day. George De Haven, the manager of the Great Eastern show, which was opened by Rob Miles, Andrew and Jacob Haight and George De Haven, paid the colonel \$250 per week one entire season for talking at the door. The colonel owned a great variety of animals in his time. Sacred cattle at one time were a drawing card.

At one time he was showing in a small town and was doing the talking at the door. The crowd was slow buying tickets. He made the announcement that if anyone went into the show and was not perfectly satisfied, he would make it satisfactory. That started them buying tickets. Soon one big fellow came out and said, "I am not satisfied." Colonel Hall told to





Captain Bates and wife as pictured in a W. W. Cole courier.

him, "Go back and stay until you are."

One of Colonel Hall's many big attractions in the business was Captain Bates and wife. W. W. Cole's show paid this couple \$1,000 per week. Captain Bates was eight feet tall and weighed 500 pounds. Mrs. Bates was eight feet and two inches tall and weighed 480 pounds. This was the tallest married couple ever on exhibition.

Colonel Hall had many experiences and achievements and they are so varied that space will not permit more. He has educated his children in the show business. Mable is now with the Jones Bros. show, working three horses. King, a high school dancing horse, does the turkey-trot and cost \$1,500; Colonel, also a high school horse, does the cake-walk and cost \$1,100. Both are Kentucky bred horses. Rob Roy, an Irish hunter, bred in Canada, cost \$1,200.

There are now four generations in the Hall family and all that are old enough are in the show business. Colonel Hall has earned a good reputation as a pioneer showman. While he has not accumulated a great fortune, he has enough to make him comfortable in his old age. Too much credit cannot be given Mrs. Hall for his success. She thoroughly understands the show business and took

entire charge of the show many times during Mr. Hall's absence.

On Friday, June 11, I attended the Hagenbeck-Wallace show at Beloit, and to make what might be a long story short, it was certainly as near an all feature show as I ever attended. There were several new acts added to the already fine show of last year, and the rapid-fire way in which it was run also added much to the entertainment. Bud Gorman, equestrian director, is past master at the business and it was due to his efficient work that something was doing every second. Frank Pierce, the cornet soloist, Frank Egner, the singer who sings the band down, also Captain Jack of Monmouth, Ill., who has been a noted band leader for years, are all worthy of mention. After the lady with the white horse had finished their dancing act, you could hear many say, "This one act alone is worth the price of the entire show." Also Bert Cole, the announcer from one end of the canvas to the other, was brought into the business and is always a valuable asset to any show; [and] George Lowande, who has been famous in the business for years.

#### A young Bert Cole.

I often heard it said that the clowns were the best they had ever seen. Among these, the one that needs special mention was the old lady who seems to have a world of trouble to find her seat. Somebody had evidently given her the wrong ticket. She was working in the hippodrome track for more than an hour and never failed to make a hit.

In visiting with C. Cory, the manager, he asked all about Janesville and seemed delighted to know that they left a good impression here last year and said that Janesville would be considered in 1916. The show is on its way west, showing two days in Minnesota next week and going from

there westward. Mr. Cory said their permanent winter quarters had not been decided on as yet. A one-day visit with a show like this adds one more day of sunshine.

#### June 26, 1915

My first year with the Adam Forepaugh show, when winter quarters were in Philadelphia, the show opened the season on April 6th in Washington D.C. I went direct from Janesville to Washington to join the show and when I introduced myself to Mr. Forepaugh who at that time I had never known, he took me in the ticket wagon, gave me the keys and told me that my duties would be to sell tickets, pay the bills and pay the people, and in fact do everything connected with the financial end of the show. I had to issue the entire sideshow and reserve seat tickets and the sellers had to account to me for everything in those departments. Mr. Forepaugh told me that the bookkeeping would be simple, that I had but one man to please, as he had no



partners. "I am not much on bookkeeping," he said, "and what I want you to do in the bookkeeping line is to put down on one side what you take in, and what you pay out on the other, so that at a glance I can tell every day what we are doing."

And while he was right in a way that it was a one man show, it was not so long until I found out that there was an Adam Forepaugh Jr., an only child that cut quite a figure around the

show; and in a way, he too had to be pleased. His mother had died when he was but five years old, and the father kept the boy with the show from that time on. While the boy was supposed to put in a certain amount of time every day with his books, this had to be done in the dressing rooms of the show, which did not mean anything in the way of an education for the boy. But growing up as he did in the business he became efficient in all the different departments of the



show and at that time was the greatest all-around animal trainer in the world. He was a good boss hostler, could load and unload the train as quick as any master of transportation the show ever had, knew all about how to put up the canvas, and the seats and in short was the most valuable all around man that they ever had in the business. The father knew this and appreciated it all, and anything that the young man's heart desired he had to have. Whether the young man wanted fifty dollars or a hundred, all he had to do in the future was to come to the ticket wagon and ask for it.

A season or two later the young man had been spending considerable money, and one day his father came to the ticket wagon and notified me that if his son wanted any more money, that he would have to get it through him. "If you value your position, Dave, I want you to recollect this and when he comes again, tell him that he will have to have an order from me," Adam Forepaugh said.

Soon after the father had left the ticket wagon, the young man was there and wanted money. I said, "Nothing doing. I have orders from your father that you must get an order from him for what money you want from this time on."

The young man looked at me and said, "Is that so? I just want to tell you something. If you don't give me what money I want, I will get one of those sledge hammers and open your safes myself."

As my safes were of the flat express style of safes, they would not stand the sledge hammer way of opening very long, so I said to him, "If that is the way you feel about it, I guess you had better have a little money. How much do you want?" And when he told me \$500, I handed it to him and away he went.

In a few minutes the father came again and asked me if I had seen Addy lately. I said, "Yes, very lately." For I well knew that he knew that Young Adam had just been there.

Mr. Forepaugh said to me, "Dave, what did he want?"

"Well," I said, "He did not come out to make me a visit. His visit was one that was strictly business."

"Did he want money?" he said.

"That was what he wanted," I replied, "and it was what he got."

"How much did he want?" said Adam Forepaugh.

When I told him five hundred, he said, "Did you give it to him?"

"I certainly did," I said.

He looked at me for a few seconds and finally said, "He is certainly a hard boy to get rid of when he wants money." And the old man walked away, and this gave me to understand that there were two men with the show that I must please and (SECTION MISSING) while the young man put in some three or four years more in the business, he then retired and has never been prominent in the business since.

The late George Evans, the great minstrel, better known as "Honey Boy" Evans in the business, was buried at his old home at Streator, Ill. The following tribute paid him by the Hagenbeck-Wallace show a few days ago only goes to show that show people seldom forget: "That George (Honey Boy) Evans had friends everywhere was demonstrated at Streator, Ill., when the Carl Hagenbeck-Wallace circus exhibited there on Tuesday, June 8. As Bert Cole, announcer for the show, was making his daily visit to the merchants, one of them, Mr. Williams by name, mentioned that Streator was the home and last resting place of George Evans. At once Mr. Cole began devising plans with the Local Lodge of Elks, No. 591, to visit the grave in Riverview cemetery after the afternoon's performance. Before the afternoon performance had commenced, thirty automobiles had been arranged for including a large auto truck donated by Mr. Williams for the big show band. About 4:30 the performance terminated, and the Elks of the show and a delegation of local Elks were on their way to the cemetery, making a procession four blocks in length. At the grave the

Rev. Rieves of the Congregational church said a few prayers, and James Sullivan and Fred Edgar sang *Nearer My God to Thee*. The sight was an impressive one, and many tears were shed. From the cemetery the boys returned to the Elks' Lodge rooms where the show band played *He is Gone, But Not Forgotten*."

The late Warren A. Patrick, who passed away on Friday last, June 18, at his home in Chicago, spent his boyhood days in Janesville, and there was but few people who knew him better than I. Twenty-one years ago last winter I gave him a letter of recommendation which at least did its part in securing him his first position in the show business--that of assistant treasurer and bookkeeper with the great Ringling show. In last week's *Billboard*, a circus and theatrical journal, an old friend writes the following, which is true to life of Warren Patrick and gives you a better idea of the man he was than it would be possible for me to do: "Pat has passed on.

"His smiling face is set and rigid; his pen laid aside, his typewriter responsive to another's touch and the great big kind heart of him stilled for aye.

"Sanguine, confident, optimistic, ever--he painted the future in roseate hues, brushing aside about doubt and misgiving with the fine scorn and splendid impatience.

Warren A. Patrick.

"His faith in the weeks, months and years to come was boundless. They held, he was sure, vast stores of wealth, success, fame and happiness, and he

apportioned these among his friends, acquaintances, clients and show folk generally with a lavish hand.

"For Pat was generous always.

He gave of his gifts, his time, his





attention and his sympathy and he gave royally.

"Also he gave of his means--and all too liberally--for, though a contrary impression was widely held, Pat's means were meager and his salary--not large.

"There may have been greater writers than Pat, but there never were or will be any more lovable.

"Some there were, even among those who knew him well and liked him much, who thought he was too profuse of praise.

The opened that he limned over lavishly and laid on his color too thick and fulsomely, but there is not one of these but will now omit that Pat painted his friends, if not as they were, at least as he wished they were and believed they might become. (sic)

"Pat was a man's man, which means that he was a manly man.

"He was a fond husband and an affectionate and very proud father, but his wife and daughter excepted, all his friends and intimates were men almost entirely show men.

"As a man he measured up away above the average and not even a president of this great country of ours will be more sincerely or more widely mourned.

### July 2, 1915

I think the only man I ever knew that could smile and keep on smiling in the face of all kinds of adversity was the once famous clown, Dan Rice. As I have told you in a former letter, Dan Rice was my first guest in Boston in the middle 80's for two weeks, which was our Houston engagement. I found the old man there when the show arrived, well dressed and looking fine, but without money. I at once engaged a room for him at the hotel and told him that we would get breakfast there in the cafe every morning and that he would be my guest at the cook tent on the lot for dinner and supper.

One morning when at breakfast in the cafe, an old gentleman was seated at a table near us. We only had to take one look at him to see that the world was against him. His breakfast did not suit him. He found fault with the waiter. His coffee seemed to be too hot or too cold. And not only was his breakfast bad, but the service as well. The old clown sat there, his face



Albert Ringling.

beaming with joy, as though he was worth a million and did not have a care in the world. After we had finished our breakfast, he said to me, "I am going to have a little talk with the old grouch."

He was soon seated at the table with the old man and commenced to inquire why everything was wrong. "Why," said he, "my good man, I have been numbered with the down and outs for more than ten years and am here at the hotel, the guest of an old fiend, and yet everything looks good to me. And this very man, Adam Forepaugh, who is showing here in Boston, at one time paid me \$26,000 for twenty-six week's work; and I have received fabulous salaries with different shows, and yet today I have not got a dollar. But our hotel here is nice, I enjoyed my breakfast and the service was certainly fine, and I am afraid, perhaps, that you are the one that is wrong."

The old man looked at him in surprise and said, "Mr. Rice, what excuse have you for not having money after receiving such enormous salaries?"

"Well," said Dan Rice, "it was like this. I always had an ambition to have a show of my own and after the close of the season with Adam Forepaugh, I put out a show of my own which was a failure. And during my life I have owned less than half a dozen shows of my own, but as a proprietor I never could make good."

After a visit of some little time with the old man and after Mr. Rice had told him that he thought it

would do him good to go to the circus where, for a time at least, he would forget his troubles, the old gentleman informed him that he did not believe in circuses and that there was "nothing doing." After a few minutes, Dan Rice joined me and said, "Dave, there is a tough subject. I would rather be down and out as I am than to have that man's disposition, if he has a million." Dan Rice spent two weeks with me and when the show left, the old man assured me that this had been two weeks of the brightest of his life in many years. And this was my last visit with Dan Rice.

On Thursday of last week, June 24, the citizens of Baraboo, Wis., and the surrounding country held a reception in honor of the first citizen and the world's greatest showman, Mr. Al Ringling. And what could have been more fitting than a gathering of this kind to show their appreciation of Mr. Ringling, not only for the beautiful opera house which he is building in the city, but also for the millions of dollars that the Ringling brothers have spent in Baraboo in the past forty years. For it is the name Ringling and the winter quarters of the show at Baraboo that put this city on the map, not only in this country, but all over Europe. For who is there, a man, woman or child that does not know that the winter quarters of the greatest show in the world is at Baraboo, Wisconsin?

Prominent men from different parts of the state were there to do honor to the man that had done so much, not only for Baraboo, but for the state of Wisconsin. Thousands were there to do him honor, not only as a great showman, but also as a citizen and a gentleman that they were glad to claim as their friend. For a time in the afternoon, while the ceremonies and speech making were taking place, all stores and shops in the city closed their doors. While I was not able to be present, I telegraphed him my congratulations, which was done by many others from all over the United States, and which gave him to understand that he was not forgotten, although for some time Mr. Al Ringling has been too ill to be with the great show on the road. The *Baraboo News* of last week gave the program of the day's doings in full,



part of which I will give you. Mayor G. T. Thuerer had charge of the exercises and the Baraboo Marine band discoursed appropriate music. Mayor Thuerer said in part: "Ladies and Gentlemen, we have assembled on this day to acknowledge our deep sense of gratitude to a man who, by his great generosity and public interest, has endeared himself to the people not only of Baraboo, but the entire surrounding neighborhood. In the construction of an opera house, Mr. Ringling is supplying a long felt want and that he should build the same of such magnificent proportions is the strongest evidence of his unselfish nature. Any community is, indeed, fortunate to be able to claim such a man as one of its citizens and the many people gathered here today signify the high regard in which our benefactor is held. Our hearts go out to him sympathetically in his illness, and I am expressing the wish of everyone that he may soon be restored to the enjoyment of good health so that he may enjoy the fruits of his labor that he is so willing to share with others. The high character of Mr. Ringling's nature is shown by the intense interest that he applies in anything that he undertakes, and in the construction of the opera house, this characteristic regarding the details is clearly shown, even though racked with illness. We delight to honor a man who by industry, honesty and integrity rises from a humble beginning to fame in his chosen field of endeavor, and particularly is this true when it is one whom we have always known. We are all proud of the Ringling brothers and take pride in relating their success from a humble beginning to all our acquaintances. Their success has been of great material benefit in many ways to our community and is accordingly appreciated by us all. One of the splendid acts showing their liberality was the substantial contribution last year to the construction of the splendid Lutheran church in memory of their parents. We wish them continued success and prosperity."

The clerks of the business houses sent some beautiful flowers and the members of St. John's Evangelical church presented

some beautiful June creations. The senate and assembly Wednesday paid tribute to Wisconsin's greatest circus man--the world's for that matter--and a leading citizen by adoption, by unanimous vote. At the close of the program, Mr. Al Ringling shook hands with many, many friends and took an automobile ride about town. Mr. and Mrs. Ringling appreciate very much all that was done on Ringling Day.

#### July 10, 1915

Many of the older citizens will recollect the famous Marks family who were with the Burr Robbins show for several seasons in the late seventies. There were five in the family, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Marks, Minnie, Sallie, and William Marks, all of the children being riders, and at that time Minnie, the eldest of the three, was one of the famous riders of the country.

William Marks, the only son, who a little later became a famous rider and for years back has traveled with all of the best shows of the country,

Minnie Marks, lady rider.



had the misfortune a few weeks ago at Coney Island to fall and break his hip. He was immediately taken to a hospital in New York where it is said it would take him the balance of the season at least to recover. At the time they were with the Burr Robbins show, Willie was a little over twelve years of age but had already commenced to show a good deal of ability as a rider. A few years later it was no trouble for him to get an engagement with the best shows in the country, and the friends that he made in Janesville in his boyhood days will hope for his speedy recovery.

In the days of the wagon show, Burr Robbins, with the performers and managers, stayed at hotels. And what was known as the hotel and ring stock of the show, about 56 horses in all, were put up at the hotel barns and livery stables. As we had to have an early breakfast, it would often times be at two or three o'clock in the morning; and with everybody in a hurry to get away, the landlord would sometimes get a little rattled, and it was no easy job for me to to always figure on the amount due.

The landlord many times also furnished the hay, straw and oats for the show.

About two o'clock one morning in a small town in Iowa, the landlord's figure and mine differed 50 cents in the show's favor. Mr. Robbins threw half a dollar on the counter and said he would rather pay the difference than have us go back over those figures again. I handed back his half dollar and told him we did not care to make the game three handed, what the landlord and I were trying to do was to find our mistake. But Mr. Robbins, true to his theory of always protecting the public, was willing to pay the half dollar out of his own pocket; but had I done so, it would have been different. After the landlord ran over his figures again, he found that I was right. He smiled and said, "I don't blame you, for if it had been you who had paid me the 50 cents, and I can readily see that it would have put a different aspect on the business which Burr Robbins would not have soon forgotten." I learned early in the business that there



was only one way to deal with Burr Robbins, and that was to the last cent. While he would occasionally show his liberality to the public, it was different when it came to a settlement with me.

A few days ago I met an old timer, and in visiting with him he asked me if I recollected the afternoon announcement that old Uncle John Stowe, who was a former partner with Burr Robbins, and the announcement he would make for the evening show. Uncle John was the typical early day showman, massive in size, wore a velvet vest and a large watch chain. While Uncle John never went through college, he insisted on making the announcement for the evening show. It went like this: "Ladies and Gentlemen, we thank you kindly for your liberal patronage this afternoon and we show here again this evening with an entire change of program, and I will guarantee that if you give us a good crowd, we will give you a good show." And this was a by word around many shows for years after Uncle John Stowe had passed away.

The above from one who spent years in the circus business shows where the manager of a show has his own troubles and has to be on the job day and night. A letter from Captain Cory, manager of the Hagenbeck-Wallace shows tells of their troubles in Minnesota a short time ago. "We no longer have four seasons in this country. The climate is changing. This year, at any rate, we are having experience with what in other climes is known as the 'rainy' and 'dry' seasons. This is to say the showmen have experienced the rainy season and are devoutly hoping that it will be followed by a dry season."

It rained on the Hagenbeck Wallace Shows at Owatonna, Minn. Whew! How it did rain. And they were on a soft lot! Despite the fact that they made the games kind of an effort to tear down and load quickly, it simply could not be done. Everybody worked like a Trojan. The elephants were pressed into service and helped push heavy dens and tableaux wagons through the ooze, but the latter seemed bottom-less

and almost as treacherous as quicksand. At nine o'clock the next morning they were still mostly on the lot. When they finally got her loaded at 10:30, Manager Cory seeing that they could not reach Red Wing before three o'clock in the afternoon and noting that the men were all in and the stock played out, took the bull by the horns, determined to cut out Red Wing and run straight through to Rochester. This was done. As a result, the cook and horse tents were unloaded and set up and the workingmen and stock all fed by midnight.

The next morning found everybody rested up and refreshed. They cleaned up bright and early and with immaculate cages, shining harness and dancing horses made a great parade hit. The business was greater than capacity in the afternoon for they had them sitting on straw in the hippodrome track. At night the seats were packed on the sides and very comfortably filled at both ends. The show is getting business at almost every stand where the weather permits, despite the business depression. It is aggressively advertised along new and original lines, and it delivers an afternoon performance that never falls to bring night busi-

Arthur Davis was manager of the Norris & Rowe Circus 1909.



ness. Also, it is in the right country at the right time. Its receipts are forty per cent greater than last year, and conditions considered, that is "going some".

#### July 17, 1915

On Wednesday afternoon and evening I had for my guest an old friend by the name of Arthur Davis, who has been a unique character in more ways than one. He has been in the show business for the past twenty-four or twenty-five years; and while some in the business would call him an "old timer," he was a mere boy when he started in the amusement line, has taken the best care of himself, and no one would take him to be a man more than thirty-five years of age. And he is one of the few men in and out of the business that does not know the taste of liquor. He started in the business determined to make it his life work and never took his eye off the lesson and he never lost his place. He has always been connected with some of the best shows, and while he commenced at the bottom of the ladder, as what is known in the business as a candy butcher, and for some time was used as a boy of convenience to fill in different places around the show, they were not long in finding out that young Davis had ability. So it was not long until he was drawing a salary, which many people had to work years to get.

His entrance into the business was with the Scribner & Smith shows in the spring of '91. The following year he went into the Walter Main Shows, which at that time was much larger and a more pretentious show than the Smith & Scribner shows. He remained with the Walter Main shows for two years and then went to Boston, where he joined the Austin & Morie shows, and was private secretary to Frank Stone. From there he went to Cincinnati, where he joined the old John Robinson shows, with whom he remained two years, and later joined the 32nd Kansas regiment in the Spanish American War.

He was soon made private secretary and chief interpreter to



General Fred Grant. At the close of the war he entered into the theatrical business in San Francisco. In 1905 and 1906, he went with the Wallace shows; in 1907 with Barnum and Bailey; and in 1908 he was F. A. Robbins' treasurer. In 1909, he was manager to Norris & Rowe's Circus; and 1910 and 1911 with the 101 Ranch. In 1912 and 1913, he was head steward of the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago, and it was he who arranged the showmen's banquet, which was the most unique of its kind ever given. He is a close personal friend of Col. W. F. Cody, "Buffalo Bill;" and the great scout never visits Chicago without being the guest of Arthur Davis.

Mr. Davis speaks, reads, and writes six different languages, which has served him to great advantage in his travels in the European countries. He has made several trips to Europe connected with shows and two different seasons went to Australia.

His close confinement in the LaSalle Hotel as steward, where much of his work was in the basement, caused his health to fail him and the doctor said, "Arthur, if you want to live you must quit this basement work and get out in the open air."

Mr. Davis was to look over the town as an advance agent for the Nat Reise Carnival company, and if there is a better all around man today, either ahead or back with the show than Arthur Davis, I have not got his address. Arthur Davis always took good care of his money and for many years has made Chicago his home, where he owns a nice residence at 4050 Prairie Avenue, and as often as possible spends his Sundays there with his family.

For the following well-written article on circuses and circus people, I am indebted to Harvey Hale of Virginia, Minn.: "This is a great day for Virginia boys. It's one of the days of real sport, for the circus is in town. Most Virginia boys have been beside themselves with unalloyed joy since early yesterday morning when the first red wagons of the Yankee Robinson Circus rolled out Chestnut Street to the lot. No mother need wonder where her wandering boy is tonight, certainly no father will. He's out at the circus grounds where a

fine brass band is playing *Down in Dear Old New Orleans*, where a vagrant wind occasionally loosens a flap of canvas and gives fleeting glimpses of a wonderful beyond. His brain is in a whirl, for it has just been demonstrated to him that there are new wonders in the world. But it isn't fair to cite the boy as the only one who comes under the spell of the circus. As a matter of fact, it gets pretty nearly everybody's goat. One

may be perfectly indifferent to circuses until the grand, glittering, gorgeous free street pageant will open dens of jungle kings and ponderous, plodding pachyderms takes its splendid course down the village streets. After that there is a new spirit inside him. It fills him

with unrest. Things go to the dickens with none to say them nay and by the time the band in the big top breaks forth in the strains of the *Chicago Tribune March* for the grand entree, he is in the middle of a frustrated, pushing, jamming nervous crowd, elbowing, jostling, fighting his way to a place of vantage to see the show. He can't help it. He has fallen under the spell of the modern American circus. He is a boy again and he is vastly better therefore.

The modern American circus is a great institution. It is better and more entertaining than ever. It is worth the price. Now as ever they are talking about making the circus man pay more license money, talking about barring him from showing in the town at all. They say he takes all the money away. Stay on the outside, listen to the band and the cheers of the people while the circus is going on and you will find yourself rapidly reaching a state of mind where you don't care if the circus takes every dad-busted nickel out of town; you'll be glad it's here and you'll be sorry you're on the outside.

For all that we have had circuses with us so long, the greater part of us

doesn't know much about them. We do not understand or appreciate that they are a bright spot in the life of every country town. They are not to be classed with a carnival, that's another matter. They cost a pretty sum to maintain. And the circus folk are not such a bad lot. When you see the aerialists and the acrobats and the contortionists do their stunts tonight, remember that their acts are

a certificate of character. They

are possible only to men

and women who live

the cleanest of

lives. Many of

them are the

grandchildren

and the great-

grandchildren

of circus folk.

They have a

proud ances-

try but they

live in a little

world by them-

selves. And the

funny clown never

misses an opportunity

to visit an orphanage or a

children's home, where the waifs

of the world are growing up, to

amuse them with his little stunts

and bring a ray of sunshine to a usu-

ally cheerless atmosphere. the big

eight-horse teamster is a real man

with a heart of gold, usually. He is

doing his humble part in a mighty

big enterprise. His sleek, well-

groomed, obedient horses are a pride

and a joy. He must be a man of char-

acter or they would never be entrusted

to him. The little lady in the

abbreviated skirt, down on the bills

as Mlle. Flora, equestrienne, perhaps

has babies of her own whom she has

taught to say, "Now I lay me down to

sleep." Sometimes they say it in the

dressing room of the performers' tent

just before she goes on in a fluff of

chiffon and rouge for her act in the

big top. Most circus folk are intensely

human and intensely likable

types. Most of them are much mis-

judged. What would life be without a

circus? We are all better for the cir-

cus. Who wants to live in a town that

never has a circus? What a "Hey,

Rube" kind of a community such a

place must be. Harrah for the circus,

say we. May its shadow never grow

less. Let's go.





# ROBBINS BROS. CIRCUS

**BIG FREE  
STREET  
PARADE**  
LARGEST IN  
THE WORLD

